

impromptu

ARMTA Calgary Branch

Member Newsletter ■ February 2023

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



RACHEL MCLELLAN

VALENTINE'S
DAY EDITION

Welcome to 2023. I hope you had a restful holiday season, and are feeling the vigor and excitement of the New Year.

We've had some changes in our board, and we are reimagining how to best engage our members. Beth, our past chair is transitioning to acting chair and has written a great letter in this issue about what ARMTA Calgary does and how we can all contribute in our own way. Our outgoing chair, Frances, said it wonderfully as well: "I encourage any member who can contribute to the Board to do so." Thank you Frances, for all your hard work over the past years! We will miss you on the board as you

focus on your work and family.

In this issue of Impromptu, you will find pedagogical articles from members Gloria Chu and Peter Jancewicz, three new member biographies, articles on the Music Conference Alberta that happened at the end of last year, and more.

This edition of Impromptu is being published near Valentine's Day! We have an exciting new event for our branch coming this month: our first ever Adult Student Recital. To celebrate Valentine's day, they have chosen the theme 'songs of love', however, students are not required to perform a love song. Come for an afternoon of fun and invite your adult students to enter!

Be sure to check the calendar of events on page 5 for all of our upcoming recitals. Next up this month: OSR, (Outstanding Student Recital). Students who were not eligible to play at ACRA

(ARMTA Calgary Recital and Awards) are invited to perform in OSR which offers some small scholarships and a great opportunity to perform and share their hard work.

I truly hope all of you can find a sense of connection to the larger community behind this organization, whether it's through volunteering, participating in the recitals, or otherwise. Wishing you all the best! ■

See page 16 for details on our
inaugural ADULT Student
Recital on February 12

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Dr. Peter Simon
President, The Royal Conservatory



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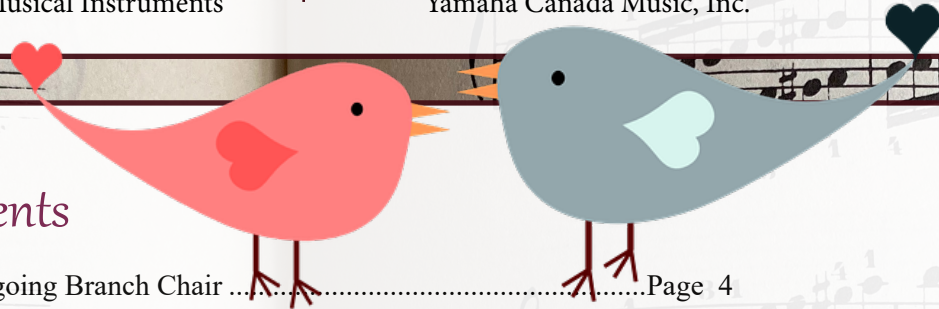


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For a detailed list of our board and conveners, visit <https://armta-calgary.com/teacher-resources/>

GREETING FROM THE OUTGOING BRANCH CHAIR

“Don’t cry because it’s over. Smile because it happened.”

– Dr. Seuss

My unfortunate message this month is that I resigned from the Calgary Branch Board at the end of January 2023. My current career and family commitments have to take priority, and that means resigning entirely from my volunteer positions.

I came on to Calgary ARMTA Branch Board in 2018 as a Convener and have played many roles within the Board ever since. It has been rewarding work, and I have fond memories of organizing Branching Out and Teacher Workshops. I created a liaison between PhillKids Music Education and ARMTA teachers, and

managed the North Student Recitals. I have enjoyed my time working in my role as Chair these past 8 months.

I am grateful for the 5 years I have had on the ARMTA Branch Board, and for the connection I have made with each of you in the ARMTA community.

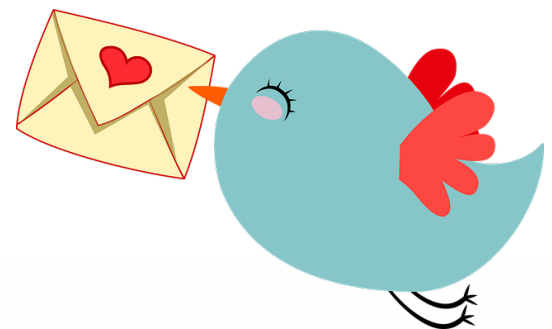
From here, the Calgary Branch Board will be working hard for our upcoming AGM on May 8, 2023. Please save the date.

I encourage any member who can contribute to the Board to do so. As

Mother Teresa said “A volunteer is a little pencil in the hand of God, who is writing a love letter to the world.” These past 5 years have been my love letter to you and all the wonderful teaching that you do.

If you too have a “love letter” to share, please contact [Lorna Sewell](mailto:lorna@asongforlife.ca) lorna@asongforlife.ca. Even “micro-volunteering” benefits us all and strengthens our organization. ■

FRANCES EWINGTON



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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

FEBRUARY 9	MOVEMUSE: THE POWER OF MOVEMENT FOR THE PIANIST, TEACHER AND STUDENT ONLINE WORKSHOP 10AM TO 12PM CALGARY BRANCH	HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/UPCOMING-EVENTS/#!EVENT/2023/2/9/FREE-WORKSHOP-THE-POWER-OF-MOVEMENT-FOR-THE-PIANIST-TEACHER-AND-STUDENT
FEBRUARY 11	OUTSTANDING STUDENT RECITAL ST. DAVID'S UNITED CHURCH 4PM TO 6PM CALGARY BRANCH	HTTPS://ARMTA-CALGARY.COM/PROGRAMS/OUTSTANDING-STUDENT-RECITAL/
FEBRUARY 12	ADULT STUDENT RECITAL ASYLUM FOR ART 2PM TO 3PM CALGARY BRANCH	HTTPS://ARMTA-CALGARY.COM/ADULT-STUDENT-RECITALS/
MARCH 4	CFMTA NATIONAL PIANO & VOCAL COMPETITION FOR ALBERTA FINALISTS RED DEER	HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/PROVINCIAL-PIANO-COMPETITION/ HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/PROVINCIAL-VOICE-COMPETITION/
MARCH 4-5	ROTARY CALGARY CONCERTO COMPETITION	HTTPS://WWW.CALGARYCIVICSYMPHONY.CA/ROTARY-CALGARY-CONCERTO-COMPETITION
APRIL 1	CALGARY BRANCH POSTER COMPETITION DEADLINE	#HTTPS://ARMTA-CALGARY.COM/ENDOWMENT-SOCIETY-PROJECTS/POSTER-COMPETITION/
APRIL 1	STUDENT COMPOSER COMPETITION DEADLINE	HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/STUDENT-COMPOSER-COMPETITION/
MAY 8	CALGARY BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DETAILS TBD	HTTPS://ARMTA-CALGARY.COM/EVENTS-CALENDAR/#!EVENT/2023/5/8/CALGARY-BRANCH-AGM
MAY 13	CALGARY BRANCH NORTH STUDENT RECITAL 2PM TO 3PM ST. DAVID'S UNITED CHURCH	HTTPS://ARMTA-CALGARY.COM/NORTH-SOUTH-RECITALS/
MAY 27	COCHRANE STUDENT RECITAL 2PM CANADIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY & COLLEGE - COCHRANE, AB	HTTPS://ARMTA-CALGARY.COM/NORTH-SOUTH-RECITALS/
MAY 31	CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE	HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/CONTINUING-EDUCATION-SCHOLARSHIP-FOR-MEMBERS/#!EVENT-REGISTER/2020/5/1/CONTINUING-EDUCATION-SCHOLARSHIP-FOR-ARMTA-MEMBERS
MAY 31	MUSIC PEDAGOGY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE	HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/ARMTA-MUSIC-PEDAGOGY-SCHOLARSHIP/#!EVENT-REGISTER/2020/6/1/ARMTA-MUSIC-PEDAGOGY-SCHOLARSHIP
JUNE 1	CALGARY BRANCH VIDEO COMPETITION DEADLINE	HTTPS://ARMTA-CALGARY.COM/ENDOWMENT-SOCIETY-PROJECTS/VIDEO-COMPETITION/
JUNE 30	BETTE JOAN RAC PIANO SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE	HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/BETTE-JOAN-RAC-PIANO-SCHOLARSHIP-2/
JUNE 30	COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD APPLICATION DEADLINE	HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/COMMUNITY-SERVICE-AWARD/
JULY 5	CFMTA NATIONAL PIANO & VOCAL COMPETITION EDMONTON, AB	HTTPS://ARMTA.CA/PROVINCIAL-PIANO-COMPETITION/
JULY 5-8	CFMTA CONFERENCE EDMONTON, AB	HTTPS://CFMTA2023.CA/

A PLEA FROM THE BRANCH BOARD By Beth Olver

Greetings! I hope this New Year 2023 has started with the promise of hope and good things to come for you and your family, and for your students and families.

Our ARMTA Calgary Branch is heading towards a crisis in leadership. In October our new and very enthusiastic Vice Chair, Karenfaye Shepherd-Carmichael, stepped down for personal reasons. In January, our Chair, Frances Ewington also stepped down from all volunteer commitments to focus on her family's needs and the professional demands on her time. There are vacancies for Music Marathon (major fundraiser for our Endowment fund which provides scholarships), student recitals (hosts), workshops and events coordinator, social media convener. We are grateful for Karenfaye and Frances and all the others who have faithfully given their time and gifts in service to our Branch.

In the meantime, ACRA (ARMTA Calgary Recital and Awards), OSR (Outstanding Student Recital),

student recitals, Endowment Society projects for students, support of local festivals and Rotary C3 Concerto Competition, involvement with ARMTA Provincial Board, communication to members, contact with our sponsors, publication of Impromptu newsletter, all continue.

A crisis is always better seen as an opportunity to review and reinvent. We need some "re" words: review, renew, reinvent, revitalize, restart, recreate, reinvigorate. Our individual ARMTA members and our ARMTA Calgary Branch need reinvigoration. Professional community is an important part of our renewal.

It's possible that COVID has made many of us more insular, isolated, cautious about getting out into the community. There are good reasons to continue to take precautions. At this point in the COVID journey, there is also a wonderful opportunity for renewal and re-establishing relationships with our professional community.

Our Branch Board is planning to provide multiple occasions for our members to learn more about ARMTA and our branch. We know it is difficult to volunteer without having a good feeling for what that involvement will mean for the volunteer and for the organization. Key to reimagining our organization is understanding our purpose, and the value our organization has for its members and for the neighbourhoods where we live and work.

To that end, between now and our AGM on Monday, May 8, we will be offering a variety of ways to engage with members. Both online and in person experiences will be offered. Ask us your questions. Find out what it means to be on the board. Discover what our conveners do. Tell us what you value about membership. Offer us your ideas to create more value. Volunteer to do one thing.

Our hope is that everyone who seeks to find value in their membership in ARMTA, will consider how they can add value to ARMTA. ■

Slaving Your Way to Piano Mastery

By Peter Jancewicz

There is an inanimate object which has a capacity to exasperate which no human being will ever attain: a piano.

~ from "In Search of Lost Time" by Marcel Proust

When we think of Martha Argerich, we think, "Now there's a person who mastered her instrument." Her playing is absolutely spectacular, from every angle. And of course, she is not the only one. There are many artists who have reached this level of mastery, and the rest of us can only look on and listen with awe at what human beings are

capable of.

The concept of "mastery" may not be what it appears on the surface. The word itself implies that somehow I, the player, am the master and it, the piano or the music, is the slave, subject to the whims of the master. I have mastered the piano, I have mastered Beethoven's Op. 111. I can impose my will on the instrument

and the music. But is this indeed the case? Let's find out.

There are four broad areas in which any musician worth their salt must develop proficiency, although frankly these are artificial distinctions for discussion purposes only. The level of one's artistry is a unified package. The first area is the instrument itself, and a profound

understanding of the physical laws determining how it functions. Then there is the body, which musicians use to play the instrument. And of course, there is the mind, which controls the body. The meaning of all this activity is found in the music.

There are three factors in tone production that have been predetermined by the construction of the piano and the laws of physics. Firstly, volume depends solely on hammer velocity. In other words, the faster the hammer strikes the string, the more sound there will be. Secondly, because the average key takes only 50 grams of pressure to depress, the amount of weight put on a key has very little effect on volume. People think that more weight, or pressing harder, produces more tone, but that's because in doing so, they press the key faster. Finally, the sound comes slightly before the key hits the key bed. So crashing into the key bed as some inveterate

pounders like to do in the guise of being expressive is pointless, exhausting and sometimes painful. It also tends to produce harder, less beautiful sound and so is useful for expressing anger but very little else.

In short, for every sound that a pianist wants, there is a way to coax it from the piano, but it is the laws of physics that determines how the sound must be produced, not the whims or delusions of the player. So who's really the master in this respect? If you want a certain tone, you have to do what the piano requires.

Then there is the human body. Like the piano, it is bound by the laws of physics. As such, there are more and less efficient ways to use it. Less efficient ways produce unnecessary strain. More efficiency contributes to better technique. For example, using fingers alone is extremely inefficient as they have evolved to grasp and manipulate

objects, but not to press down piano keys, which is a different type of movement. No amount of strengthening exercises is going to change that, and moving in unnatural ways always involves excess use of force. As pianists, we want to find what works best, not to force the issue for short term gain. As Kramer famously said in Seinfeld, "I don't argue with the body, Jerry. That's an argument you can't win". Either our movements are bio-mechanically efficient or they are not. More physically efficient movements produce higher quality, more enjoyable results at the piano. And they just plain feel better.

The physical element of effective piano technique rests on the twin pillars of relaxation and support. In fact, the possibility of being relaxed depends on proper support. This makes posture critical. Poor posture renders movement more difficult. Support is also necessary in the position of the hand touching

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the keys. I favour a completely relaxed hand because overly curved fingers take tension to hold them that way, which breeds strain. In addition, an important component of support is the direction of movement of the arms, wrists and hands. It is preferable to move in ways that allow the finger bones to be supportive, and avoid as much as possible using muscles for support, much like walking.

With good support, physical relaxation is relatively straightforward. It's a question of getting the knack of letting go and not straining. Since each piano key requires 50 grams of pressure to play, the belief that one must use force is absurd, like using a forklift to pick up a bag of groceries. Once a good position of support for each finger has been established, relaxing is simply a matter of paying attention to physical sensation; ease, softness and lightness are good descriptors of the necessary sensations. Hardness, resistance and

effort are warning signs of strain in students, and that strain hinders expression as well as enjoyment.

The technique of one of the world's top jazz pianists is an example of what not to do, unless you happen to be Keith Jarrett. Watching him play reminds me of the saying, "Children should be seen and not heard." From a pedagogical perspective, Keith should be heard and not seen. His playing is sublime and his technique works marvellously for him, but woe betide any enthusiastic piano student who tries to emulate his physical movements. For the vast majority of piano students who are not blessed with his genius, less strain equals more satisfaction. So, is it really better to force the unwilling body to cooperate, as the connotation of "master" suggests, or to surrender to its bio-mechanical preferences?

The third area is psychological, and in

my opinion the most important one. As players relax physically, they calm down, and as they calm down, they relax. As a result, they play more sensitively, and are better able to enjoy playing. And as they enjoy the process more, they tend to pay attention better. In a sense, the psychological issue rests on similar foundations as the physical technique: support and relaxation.

By psychological support, I mean tools that encourage calm and attentiveness in the player. These supports include, but are not limited to reliable physical technique, effective practice techniques, positive, artistic attitudes, and practical, sincere encouragement from teachers and parents. By attitudes, I mean playing for the love of the music, not in order to pass exams or win competitions. I believe these may put an unhealthy and unnecessary pressure on the player, and can easily turn what is supposed to be a joyful, rewarding, playful activity into



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an unpleasant burden. Another positive attitude is captured in the famous quote by Henry Ford: “Whether you think you can or you can’t, you are right.” If you think you can’t, you always have an excuse for not getting it. If you think you can, you will discover how to make it so. Once you learn to do something properly, it is actually effortless and very enjoyable. There is no good reason to turn the learning of music into an iron man competition. That’s not what music is for.

With real supports in place, it becomes possible to largely let go of anxiety and play with less fear. Common anxieties include fear of failure, fear of not pleasing parents or teachers, and most paralyzing, fear of not getting it right. Who wants to do anything that makes them so constantly afraid? No wonder so many people quit. The problem with anxiety is that it makes one insensitive, both to the beauty and exhilaration of music as well as the physical pleasure that comes from moving well. Our minds work best not forced, and as long as we suffer from the delusion that we are actually the master of our minds, we condemn ourselves to eternal anxiety. Far better to surrender to the inevitable and let the mind’s processes flow naturally and pleasantly.

And now we arrive at the nitty-gritty: music, which is the reason for all this hard but ultimately rewarding work. Music consists of numerous intertwined elements, of which pitch and rhythm are the most basic. In playing a piece of music, it’s not what you play - in that you have no choice - but how you play it. Many students believe that just getting their fingers in the right place at the right time is enough for a good performance, and then wonder why they don’t enjoy the sound. There is a large and immediately audible difference between metronomically correct versus musical rhythm, just as there is between merely correct versus artistically played tones. Most students instinctively understand musical phrasing when it is discussed with a view to understanding, but are monumentally disinterested when confronted with a rulebook. Just why does a diminuendo at the end of a phrase usually sound better?

While enjoying a relaxed approach and maintaining alert and open ears, the pianist’s practicing becomes a creative and engaging process, not a repugnant means to an elusive end. With proper practice, the creative pianist learns to adjust their interpretation on the fly, reacting dynamically to newly discovered implications in the music, piano and acoustics, as well as to

their own changing responses to the piece. In other words, listening artistically and without fear, we are inspired to be creative as we play, to discover and improvise little changes which keep both our performance and our relationship to the music fresh and alive. It is the sound and feel of the music which informs us how to play as we play. Those who believe they are indeed masters and fruitlessly try to impose their will on music are doomed to repeat the same way every time, which is the antithesis of art. By their own actions, misunderstood “mastery” condemns them to be nothing more than flawed biological iPods.

Of course, all this talk of masters and slaves is sheer nonsense. It’s not that simple. I like to think of making music as a friendly conversation between equals, music, piano and pianist. It makes no sense to separate them, inasmuch as if you remove any one, you are left with nothing. The music plays the pianist as much as the pianist plays the piano, and the piano itself influences and inspires the pianist. When approached as a fascinating conversation, strain magically evaporates and all that is left is enjoyable and satisfying music, which is what it should be. ■



Peter Jancewicz is a composer, pianist, writer and teacher. For more information, please visit his website at www.peterjancewicz.com.



Last year, the Calgary branch of ARMTA promoted a new Conference Grant. The intent of this grant is to encourage members to attend the annual Music Conference Alberta. \$1000 is available in even number years, whereby a maximum of five Calgary Branch members attending MCA may receive up to \$200 each. Two members applied and both were reimbursed up to \$200 of the registration fees that they paid. The articles that they each wrote follow.

An Event Worth Attending

By Frances Ewington

The Music Conference Alberta (MCA) is Alberta's premier conference for band directors, choral conductors, elementary music teachers, and studio music instructors. For me this was my first time attending this conference.

MCA 2022 was held at the beautiful Allard Hall at MacEwan University in Edmonton. The conference started in the Triffo Theatre with a Keynote Panel of music professionals of all different backgrounds. They gave an inspiring talk about diversity in music and music education. As we all emerge from the COVID pandemic, fostering inclusivity, relevance, and positive change is more important than ever. Thank you to the panelists Dr. Adam Con, Shireen Abu-Khader, Andrew Balfour, Dr. Kofi Gbolonyo, and Dr. Shelley Jagow for opening our minds and hearts to kickstart the conference.

More than 50 sessions were offered at MCA 2022 over the 2 days. I found it hard to choose what sessions to go to as all were relevant and appealing. I chose to attend:

MENTAL HEALTH FOR MUSIC EDUCATORS *with Dr. Sara Brooks*

Dr. Sara took us all through the journey of what life has been like for we teachers these past 3 years. It has been trying and difficult on all musical fronts. Being able to share our experiences with one another and get self-care guidance from Dr. Sara was gratifying and healing.

WEST AFRICAN DANCE-DRUMMING *with Dr. Kofi Gbolonyo*
We all know that rhythm is king and the foundation of musical training. Dr. Kofi taught us how African rhythms could be incorporated into any classroom through body drumming. It was fun and essential, and showed us all the universal magic that is music.

THE COALITION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION NATIONAL STUDY *with Dr. Adam Con*
This study says it all - funding for music education is in trouble throughout Canada. We all know the enormous benefits that music education has to offer, but our governments have a different point of view. It is up to us to unify and speak up for music in all sectors of government.

BUILDING A RECORDING SETUP FOR YOUR HOME OR CLASSROOM

with Marcel Hamel
From computer requirements, software options, and audio interfaces to microphones, speakers, and headphones, Marcel covered it all. I am afraid that my knowledge of technological jargon is pretty low and I should have just left this session to the Long & McQuade crew.

INDIGENOUS CHORAL COLLABORATING 2022 *with Andrew Balfour*
How do we include Indigenous music into our teaching? First, we have to listen. Andrew drew a wonderful picture of the Indigenous perspective, and showed us all how important it is to collaborate with our First Nations people. It is only through cooperation that true representation through art can be attained.

CIRCLESINGING *with Karen Porkka*
This was my favourite session. Created by Bobby McFerrin, this form of singing builds bridges across cultural and language barriers and invites us to listen deeply and interact with all music that is offered. It was a tremendous way to conclude this conference.

If you haven't been to MCA before, you are really missing out. ■

...Continued from previous page

Capacity for Growth: A Mental Health Check-In

By Gloria Chu

The Music Conference Alberta had a powerful impact to my approach in music teaching. There were sessions that reminded me of the initial COVID lockdown, the fear of the unknown, the mindset as an individual, as a parent and leader to my students. As teachers, parents and students shared their story of the initial experience of the lockdown, memories of my response and reaction to the series of challenges flooded in. Dr. Sara Brooks shared her expertise as a Psychotherapist and musician on how to go forward from this point in time.

She reminded us the importance of checking in with ourselves: how are you coping? Where are your mental wellness levels and what kinds of self-care do you need? Professional musicians are three times more likely to experience anxiety and/or depression than the general population.

As a music teacher we often put students' needs and success above our own. The session was a much-needed opportunity for me to be allowed the chance to check in with my personal emotional gas tank:

- Full tank: do I have a full tank of feeling regularly energized, positive mood where focus and concentration is feeling solid? Or
- Half Tank: where I am feeling drained, increased irritability or low mood with challenges focusing and completing tasks? Or
- Almost Empty: possibly feeling almost empty with super low energy, agitated mood and hard to focus and complete tasks?

Upon recognizing our own mental wellness levels, we can take steps to improving self-care. To tune into our capacity for growth, Dr. Sara Brooks

shares the following circle to be part of our daily lives.

Under the advice of Dr. Sara Brooks, I have reflected and re-established my personal basic needs to remain mentally healthy, established new boundaries for my personal role in my family and music studio, planned out actions for self-care, and brainstormed the signs of perfectionism and learning to track self-talk.

This reflection process had an unimaginable impact on my approach to music teaching and personal life. It changed my perspective of priorities and provided me with new tools to inspire my students to grow. I invite you to check in with yourself. I am confident the time taken for personal reflection will re-energize the approach to process the challenges unique to your music space. ■





Announcing our second annual Creative Poster and Video Competitions!

Students of ARMTA Calgary teachers are invited to submit an original poster or video that represents a piece of music or speech arts selection that they are studying or have recently studied. The entries will be submitted in one of two age categories: 12 years and under • 13 years and over

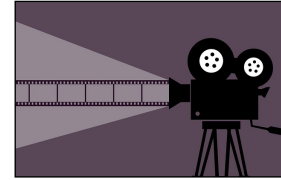


Poster Competition Prizes

Each category will have three prizes available*:

- First place: \$150
- Second place: \$100
- Third place: \$50

Deadline April 1, 2023



Video Competition Prizes

Each category will have three prizes available*:

- First place: \$200
- Second place: \$125
- Third place: \$75

Deadline June 1, 2023

Winners will have their posters and videos published in the Impromptu newsletter and on the ARMTA Calgary branch website. Full contest details, regulations and entry forms are available on the [ARMTA Calgary website](#).

In Loving Memory of Ethel Huber October 26, 1936 to January 19, 2023

Ethel Huber, beloved wife of Ornan Huber, of Calgary, AB, passed peacefully into the presence of her Lord on Thursday, January 19, 2023, at the age of 86 years. She was born in Claresholm, AB, on October 22, 1936, the second of six children born to James and Cecilia Calderwood. She moved to Calgary, AB, in 1954 where she met Ornan. They were married in 1957 and celebrated their 65th anniversary in 2022.

Ethel was a gifted pianist and teacher, teaching piano in Calgary, AB, for more than 50 years. She completed a BMus at the University of Calgary in 1985. Ethel loved her Lord Jesus Christ, her husband Ornan, her family, and her music, and will be remembered for her energy,

hospitality, and her ability to create lasting friendships. She was tireless in her service to her faith and family, and the many music organizations she supported.

Besides her loving husband Ornan, Ethel is survived by her children, Allan Huber (Cristina), and Patricia Mealey (Brent) of Calgary, AB, Dale Huber (Sherry) of Edmonton, AB, and Jim Huber (Naomi) of Lethbridge, AB; her grandchildren Scott (Shauna), Stephanie, and Deanna (Fred) of Edmonton, AB, Morgan, Rhys, Nicolas, Joel (Amanda), Kirk (Emily) and Kate, all of Calgary, AB. She is also survived by her brothers Charles (Linda), Herb, Ken (Tracy), and Glenn (Elise); her sister-in-law Julie



Ethel Huber

Calderwood, as well as many nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends.

A Celebration of Ethel's Life will be held at Bethany Chapel (3333 Richardson Way SW, Calgary, AB), on Saturday, February 11, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. Condolences, memories, and photos may be shared and viewed at www.McInnisandHolloway.com. ■

Announcing a NEW Competition!



An annual award for teenage students who demonstrate a high level of accomplishment in two disciplines. Accomplishments will be determined through an application process, including performance requirements. Entries will be submitted in one of two categories:

- One ARMTA discipline and one secondary discipline
- Two ARMTA disciplines

Each category will have three cash prizes available*:

- First place: \$300
- Second place: \$200
- Third place: \$100

Deadline October 31, 2023

VOLUNTEER JUDGES ARE NEEDED FOR ALL THREE CONTESTS and can be done from home on your own time. Adjudication for the competitions will occur the two months following each deadline. If you would like to volunteer, please contact [Carolyn Steeves](#)



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CONGRATULATIONS

to the Winners of ACRA (ARMTA Calgary Recitals & Awards)



The Endowment Society of the Calgary Music Teachers' Association has split among 37 winning students a total of **\$2580!**

And the Provincial Recognition Fund contributed **\$1500** to an additional 12 students, for a combined total of \$4080 paid out in student scholarships.

Piano

ADVANCED

Jiabei Luo (Silver)
Mikhail Adamov (Silver)
Jason Wang (Bronze)
Vivian Liu (Bronze)

INTERMEDIATE

Billy Tang (Gold)
Marcus Yu (Gold)
Valeria Zhao (Silver)
Ethan Leung (Silver)
Eric Chan (Silver)
Zimu Wang (Silver)
Kaslyn Chan (Bronze)
Reyna Cai (Bronze)

JUNIOR

Vesper Galloway (Gold)
Alice Cheng (Silver)
Paul Rostami-Ghomi (Bronze)
Aidan Liang (Bronze)

Voice

ADVANCED

Aidan Pfeifer (Gold)
Claire McCluskey (Silver)
Melanee Thomas (Bronze)

JUNIOR

Kealani Lafontaine (Gold)
Annalina McDouall (Silver)
William Pawluk (Silver)
Kawai Lafontaine (Silver)
Milla Singh (Bronze)

Speech Arts

ADVANCED

Arian Farahbakhsh (Gold)

INTERMEDIATE

Gordon Lu (Gold)
Anjali Datta (Silver)
Justin Zhou (Bronze)

JUNIOR

Robert Wang (Gold)
Malia Datta (Silver)
Kallista Chan (Silver)
Clare Cheng (Silver)
Kaitlyn Chan (Silver)

Strings

INTERMEDIATE

Hayden Lindskog (Gold)
Tobias Loewen (Silver)

JUNIOR

Jerry Zhang (Gold)
Sophie Dunne (Gold)
Ellie AuYeung (Silver)
Scarlett Johnstone (Bronze)

Woodwinds

JUNIOR

Maisha Mesbah (Gold)
Maisha Mesbah (Silver)
Andi Liu (Bronze)



ACRA photographs courtesy of Nadia Khlynovskaya

ACRA (...CONTINUED)

CONGRATULATIONS to all winners, teachers, parents and performers.
And a BIG thank you to our sponsors and our ACRA Convener, Naomi Williams!

Advanced Theory Scholarships

Harmony, Gold ~ Chanan Ngo

Harmony, Silver ~ Mikhail Adamov

History, Gold ~ Sorena Cook

History, Silver ~ Jackson Xu

History, Bronze ~ Mikhail Adamov



Barb Robertson (left) • Frances Ewington (right)

Click [here](#) to view the ACRA Recital Program

And click [here](#) to view the performances!



Teachers of ACRA Winners

Alexandra Andrievsky
Colleen Athparia
Paul Bagley
Rachel Baljeu
Esther Bing
Sally Canuel
Fiona Carnie
Andrea Case
Gloria Chu
Frances Ewington
Rachel Hop
Nadia Khlynovskaya
Zoe Ko
Linda Kundert
Emily Ong
Allen Reiser
Barbara Robertson
Sue Roggensack
Peter Rudzik
Helve Sastok
Rose Schmaltz
Jacqueline Serpas Mendoza
Lorna Sewell
Kathryn Stewart-Corvino
Kimberley Yim

Named Scholarships

Peter Walker Memorial Scholarship
Mainstream Music Awards
Harold Saklofske Scholarship
Advanced String Scholarship
Joan Bell, Honoured Teacher Award

Noah Chen
Chanan Ngo & Mikhail Adamov
Avery Krahn
Avery Krahn
Jiabei Luo

Named Scholarships

See winners on previous page

Joan Bell Scholarship

After she retired from teaching school, Joan taught many successful piano students and cared deeply about them and all high achieving students. She served on many committees with ARMTA, including this recital and awards ceremony for many years. She also worked with other organizations to recognize student dedication and outstanding commitment to music studies. In honor of her milestone birthday in June 2022, ARMTA Calgary is pleased to provide a scholarship in her name for this 2023 recital.

Peter Walker Memorial Scholarship

Peter Walker was active for many years in Calgary as a High-School teacher, a pianist, and a piano instructor. In his younger years, he was involved with Jeunesse's Musicales performing concerts in the city, often to school kids. Much later, he became a highly active member of The Calgary Diploma Association. Upon his retirement as a school teacher, he moved to Courtenay, and became a moving force in the musical community there as a concert promoter and as a pianist.

Harold Saklofske Scholarship

Harold Saklofske was an instrumental force in the Calgary music scene since the 1940's as a pianist and band leader. His big band was THE sound used for all of the big functions and visting celebrities, right through to the 1990's. Harold always saw the importance of nurturing and inspiring students. With Harold's passing in 2016, his family has committed \$500 a year for eight years to be gifted as scholarships to promising young musicians at the ARMTA Calgary Recitals and Awards. There will be two scholarships of \$250.00 each named after Harold and Frances Saklofske. NOTE: Only one student qualified to win this year's scholarship.


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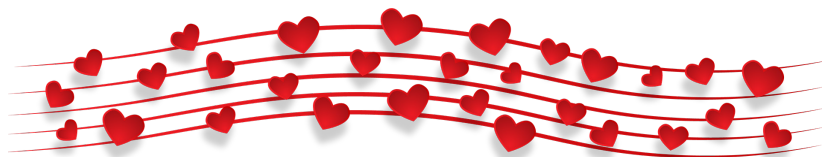
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Join us for our inaugural ADULT Student Recital on February 12

Leave the kids at home and come on out to the Asylum for Art for some Valentine's Day fun! They sell cocktails, coffee/espresso and food. Bring your spouse, partner, family, or friends.

When: Sunday, February 12 from 2:00 to 3:00 pm

Where: Asylum for Art downtown at [2505 14 St SW](#)

Registration Deadline is Wednesday, February 8 or until full and is first-come first served. Though we are celebrating Valentine's Day, students are welcome to play any piece.

Tell your adult students to register by February 8th.
Click [here](#) and send them this link!



Visit our [webpage](#) for more details about the Valentine's Day Themed Adult Student Recital

MEET SOME OF OUR NEWEST MEMBERS



Kathy Dornian

Kathy Dornian is a nationally respected pedagogue, chamber musician, adjudicator and examiner. Since 1985, Kathy has served on the faculty at Mount Royal University Conservatory. In 2019, she was awarded the prestigious national ‘Teacher of Distinction Award’ by the Royal Conservatory of Music. She travels throughout Canada and the US as an adjudicator, workshop clinician and senior examiner for RCM Examinations. She has been one of the RCM pioneers since 2020 in RCM online exam delivery. Known as an inspiring educator who fosters curiosity in her students, she is certainly one of Calgary’s most sought-after teachers.

A native Calgarian, Stephanie began piano lessons at the age of six, in a tiny farmhouse a field over from the rural property she grew up on. In 2012 she earned an Associate Diploma in Piano Performance from the London College of Music with First Class Honours. That same year, she also completed the requirements for the Intermediate Pedagogy Certificate (toward an ARCT in Pedagogy through the RCM) for which she was awarded a Regional Gold Medal. In 2018, Stephanie attained a Licentiate Diploma in Piano Duet with Distinction from the London College of Music. Performing with her friend and colleague Lisa Kiernan, Stephanie has performed as a duo in concerts, festivals, and private functions around Calgary to much acclaim. Teaching duet repertoire has become a passion for Stephanie, as it offers a unique challenge and builds connection between students within her studio. She began teaching piano at seventeen, and now over twenty years later, she has moved her private studio, Mountain View Music Studio from North Calgary back to the countryside. Serving the families of rural Rockyview County, as well as North Calgary and Airdrie, it is Stephanie’s aim to inspire every student to become a life-long learner, through playing the piano.

Stephanie Orr



Linda Wolstencroft

Linda is an ARCT diploma level student and performer, working towards challenging the ARCT exam in 2023. After forty years without it, her love of piano has brought her back, and she’s happily playing, performing, and teaching. She is also an author (with a novel in the works), a mother to three grown sons, and she and her husband have six grandchildren. She spent her career as a Professional Engineer, corporate executive, consulting business owner and part-time university professor. Linda is looking forward to connecting with you, learning from you, developing her teaching practice, and getting involved with ARMTA-Calgary.

BRANCHING OUT

ARMTA, The Arts and Beyond

When: Sunday March 12, 7:00 pm, 2023

Where: St. Thomas United Church, 100 Hawkwood Blvd, Calgary NW

What: Arts Showcase followed by a social time to meet and mingle.

CFMTA suggests a “Branching Out” activity each year. This year, our branch is reaching out to other individuals and groups to come together.

Stay “tuned” for more details.

The Power of Visual Progress

By Gloria Chu

“Thank you, Johnny, I look forward to hearing you share the newly explored interpretations in the Chopin Nocturne next week”. This is a common phrase I hear myself saying at the end of many lessons. As I reflect on it, much of Johnny’s lesson was spent on discovering additional musical expressions to his current repertoire, fixing misread notes and clarifying rhythmic notations. As a teacher, it is easy to focus on what’s wrong or not done, more than what has been accomplished thus far. I was anxious to find a way to show and help the student feel the progress. Research has shown that more of our brain is devoted to processing visual information than any other senses. Such as, we tend to remember images better than words. Thus, visualizing progress can empower the brain to further motivate us in the learning journey.

To guide my students in visualizing their progress, I have explored three strategies: I Kan!, gamify it: puzzle, and a progress bar. The three strategies can be mixed and matched for different musical concepts.

I Kan!

This strategy is based on the Kanban workflow management method. In learning a piece, there are many components to consider. With notes, rhythm, form, key changes, and tempo, the mind engages so much mental energy just to manage what needs to be comprehended from the piece. Prioritizing what to do is a daunting task for the brain. To nurture growth and independence, I challenge students to discover the most appropriate strategy unique to their learning abilities and the time available.

Step 1: Create the following chart:

Tasks	Doing	Done

Step 2: List out what needs to be accomplished to learn the repertoire. Each task is on a separate post-it note. Put all the items under the “Tasks” column.

Step 3: Limit the work, choose two tasks and move them to the “Doing” column. Choose tasks that are appropriate to the time available for the current practice session.

Step 4: Upon completing the task, move it to the “Done” column.

The objective is to have two tasks in the “Doing” column until all tasks are completed. Tasks can be shifted to the “Doing” column but the limit is only two. Students can see the “Done” column for all that has been accomplished. Thus, for the practice session, students can target the goals in the “Doing” column and not be overwhelmed.

Gamify it: Puzzle

A puzzle game can be formed for a visual representation of the goals or practice items.

Step 1: Draw or print out a picture of your choice. This can be a picture of a composer, the first page of

the piece, or any visual artwork.

Step 2: Cut the picture into puzzle pieces, the number of pieces can be chosen based on the number of practice goals for the current stage of learning.

Step 3: Write a practice goal on the back of each puzzle piece.

Step 4: Add the piece to the puzzle each time the practice goal is accomplished.

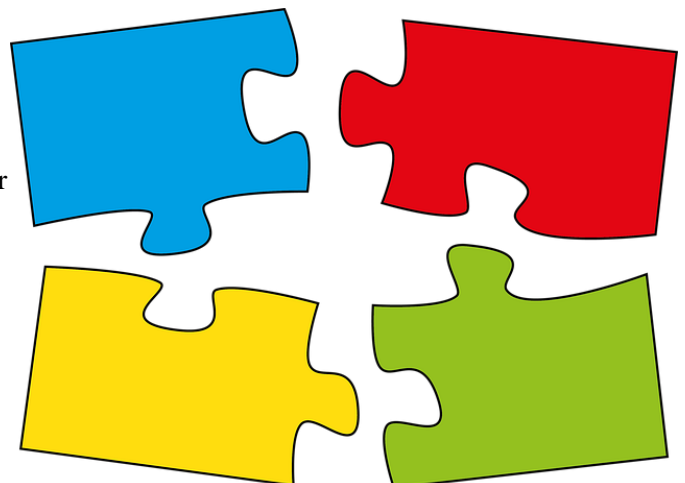
Step 5: Continue this process until all pieces of the puzzle are complete.

This can be used as a visual indicator for the practice goals to be accomplished during each practice session or a long-term project for an upcoming recital. Students can see the formation of the picture and feel proud of their small wins through the completion of each goal.

Progress Bar

Much like video games, visually tracking progress with a chart or progress bar can be a huge motivation.

Step 1: Dedicate a small space for the progress bar. Consider putting this progress bar in an area where the student can see it easily. I usually suggest it on the music stand, in front of the practice





Visually tracking progress with a chart or progress bar can be a huge motivation.

notebook, or on a wall beside the practice area. Some students have chosen the fridge to display their achievements on the progress bar. This adds further accountability as family members also see the progress bar.

Step 2: Each time a practice goal is accomplished, a sticky note is added to the progress bar.

The progress bar can be adapted for any level of learning.

For a beginning student, we started with achieving 5 sticky notes during the week for the practice piece:

- 1) Naming all notes aloud correctly.
- 2) Clapping the rhythm aloud with a steady beat.
- 3) Play and sing the note names accurately.
- 4) Play and tap with a steady pulse.
- 5) Perform for a family member or favourite toy with a good tone and steady pulse.

For an advanced student, to achieve sticky notes:

- 1) Each sticky note represented a practice section.
- 2) Each practice section is to be played with a steady beat at a specific metronome tempo, gradually progressing quicker.
- 3) Listening to specific music concepts discussed in the lesson.

The three strategies can be adapted to each student's unique learning abilities and current level. In my studio, having visual progress not only helped manage practice goals but also added confidence, relieved a sense of being overwhelmed and boosted motivation to practice! ■



Gloria Chu, ARMTA Calgary Member

Gloria Chu is a dedicated piano, violin and vocal pedagogue, an RCM examiner, festival adjudicator, composer, and performer. She is the recipient of the 2022 RCM Teacher of Distinction Award for her leadership as a music educator instilling lifelong love of music in the community. In addition, she has been recognized by Steinway & Sons with a Top Teacher Award for her outstanding instruction and leadership in piano education. Her innovative teaching methods motivate students to develop confidence in expressing their unique voice in both music and life.



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Financial Assistance for Exam Fee from a Conservatory

Working towards completing an associate diploma from a Canadian Conservatory? We've been there, too! That's why the Calgary Branch Board is excited to announce our NEW affiliate grant.

A maximum of \$500 will be given to reimburse one exam fee (practical or theory) from level 10 or associate level exams with a recognized Conservatory (e. g. Royal Conservatory of Music

or Conservatory Canada, Trinity, or other).

The application deadline is September 30 of this year and is for exams taken between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023.

To celebrate your achievement, 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/>. ■



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PROVINCIAL LIFE MEMBER

Elisabeth Szojka

Elisabeth Szojka has been a member of ARMTA for 55 years and has recently retired. She now becomes a Provincial Life Member and retired Calgary Branch member. She now pays no provincial membership fees and half-rate Calgary fees. A certificate will be presented to honour her contributions to teaching music.

Said of Elisabeth from another Calgary branch member, "My daughter studied with her. She is a lovely teacher and her recognition is well deserved." ■



2023 Program Dates

<https://www.cassamusicalarts.com/>



Workshops

Online Piano Masterclass with Michel Fournier from Montreal: February 18, 9:00am – 1:15pm

In-Person Jazz for Teachers with Derek Stoll: June 10, 9:00am – 12:00pm at Eric Nyland's Bridgeland Studio

In-Person Guitar for Beginners with Brett Gunther: May 6, 9:00am-12:00pm at Eric Nyland's Bridgeland Studio
(Bring a nylon string guitar, see Long & McQuade for rentals)

In-Person Programs

Cassa Kids at Play: July 10 – 14 from 9:00am – 4:00pm

Cassa Jazz: July 10 – 14 from 9:00am – 3:30pm • Friday Cabaret 7:00pm

Cassa Composers: July 10 – 14 from 9:00am – 3:30pm • Friday Cabaret 7:00pm

Cassa Songwriting: July 10 – 14 from 1:00pm – 4:00pm • Friday Cabaret 7:00pm

Cassa Guitar for Beginners: July 10 – 14 from 9:00am – 12:00pm

Cassa Recital: A Showcase Celebrating 30 Years!: July 16 at 7:00pm

Cassa Piano: July 17 – 21 from 9:00am – 5:00pm • Thursday Recital 7:00pm & Friday Recital at 2:00pm

Cassa Pedagogy with Michel Fournier: July 17 from 9:00am – 4:00pm • Lunch provided

Cassa Adult Piano: July 18 – 20 from 9:00am – 5:00pm • Thursday Recital 2:00pm

Cassa Musical: August 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 & 10 from 9:00am – 3:00pm • Wednesday Performance August 10, 7:00pm

Cassa Staging: August 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 & 10 from 9:00am – 12:00pm

Online Programs

Cassa Piano Masterclass Online with Michel Fournier: July 13 from 9:00am – 1:15pm

Cassa Jazz: July 24 – 28 from 10:00am – 12:00pm • Private afternoon lessons TBD, Friday Concert – 2:00pm

Cassa Pedagogy: July 24 & 25 from 9:00am – 12:00pm

Cassa Piano: July 24 – 28 from 9:00am – 4:00pm • Friday Recital 2:00pm

Cassa Adult Piano: July 25 – 27 from 9:00am – 4:00pm • Thursday Recital 2:00pm

Location of

In-person Cassa Kids at Play, Piano,
Adult Piano, Pedagogy, Jazz, Guitar,
Songwriting and Composers:

St. Vladimir's Cultural Centre
404 Meredith Road NE
Calgary Alberta

Musical & Staging Location:

Glenmore Christian Academy
16520 24th Street SW
Calgary Alberta

Contact Information:

Cassa Musical Arts
(info@cassamusicalarts.com)
10 Mt. Apex Green SE
Calgary Alberta T2Z 2V2
Telephone: 403-481-4224 (Darcy)
Telephone: 403-969-0418 (Linda)



Outstanding Student Recital

Thank you to Rachel Baljeu, OSR Convener

It is my pleasure to be the convener for the upcoming Outstanding Student Recital, which will be held on February 11 at 4pm at St. David's United Church in Calgary.

Students of ARMTA Calgary members who received over 85% on their practical exam and completed the theory co-requisites, but didn't make the top three marks for their category were invited to perform at this recital. Quite a few of the students, marked with * on the list, received 90% or above on their practical exam. I am excited to hear performances from these hard-working students, and also to award scholarships to eight of the best performances at the recital.

Congratulations to the students, and to their teachers:

Alexandra Andrievsky, Paul Bagley, Esther Bing, Natalie Brodsky, Gloria Chu, Frances Ewington, Rachel Hop, Denise Jamieson, Nadia Khlynovskaya, Linda Kundert, Jacqueline Serpas Mendoza, Allen Reiser, Barbara Robertson, Peter Rudzik, Carolyn Steeves, Looi Tan and Laura Whitehead

~ Rachel Baljeu, OSR Convener

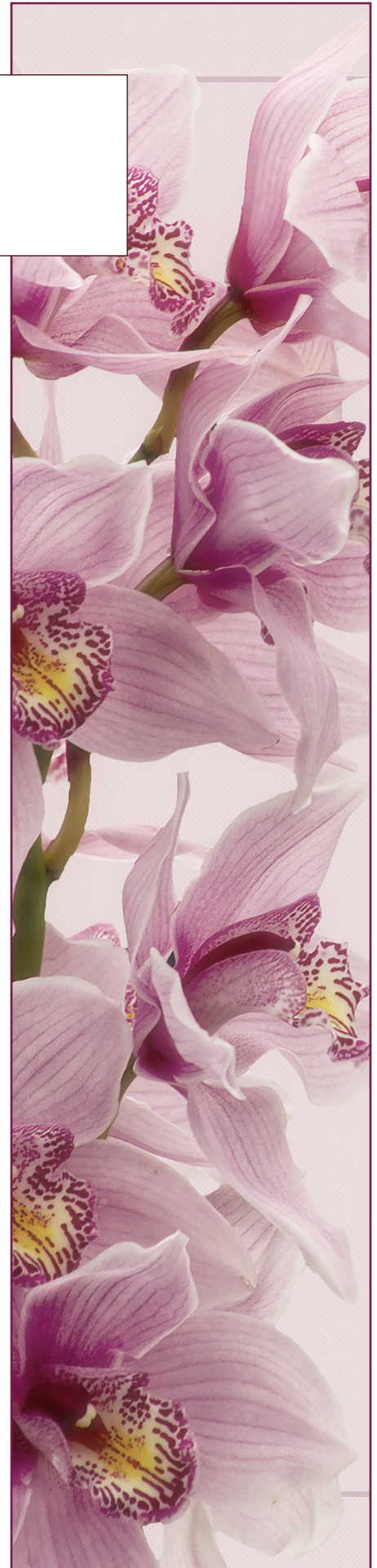
90+	First Name	Last Name	Instrument	Level
*	Sarah	Barr	Piano	1
*	Davin	Chan	Piano	4
*	Elva	Chen	Piano	5
*	Bridgette	Chen	Piano	7
*	Evangeline	Cheng-Cappelli	Piano	3
	Evangeline	Cheng-Cappelli	Piano	4
*	Joel	Cook	Piano	8
	Sorena	Cook	Piano	10
	Sophie	Dunne	Voice	2
*	Bohan	Feng	Piano	5
*	Foster	Goertz	Piano	1
	Ava	Goertz	Piano	7
	Hailey	Ha	Speech Arts	5
*	Austin	Ho	Piano	4
	Sophie	Jirov	Voice	4
	Bosco	Kwok	Piano	7
	Aliya	Lakhoo	Speech Arts	6
*	Cole	Lam	Piano	8
*	Katelyn	Lee	Piano	1

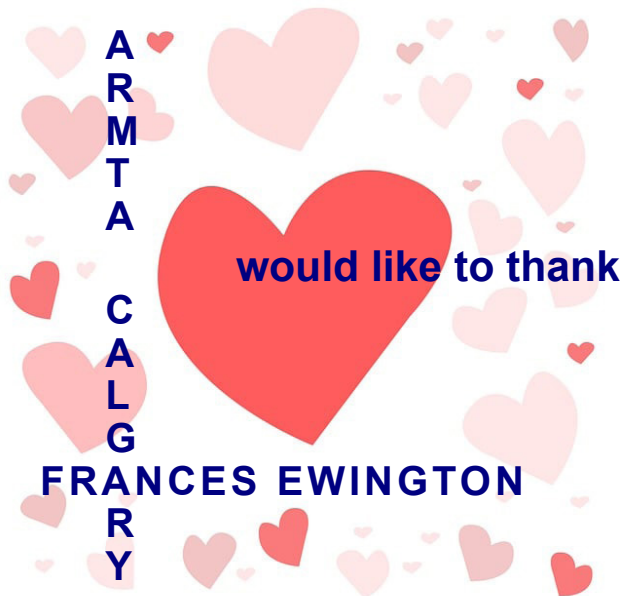
* OSR Students with marks **90** or greater will receive a medal

90+	First Name	Last Name	Instrument	Level
*	Kristen	Lee	Piano	4
	Sophia	Li	Piano	4
	Eric	Li	Piano	4
*	Christopher	Lim	Piano	3
*	Ethan	Lin	Piano	8
	Angelina	Liu	Piano	6
	Hana	Loewen	Strings	4
	Nora	McCluskey	Voice	8
*	Michael	McHugh	Piano	8
*	David	Minassian	Piano	4
*	Riyanika	Mishra	Piano	4
	Evan	Moskovitz	Piano	1
	Stephen	Pawluk	Voice	2
*	William	Pawluk	Piano	3
	Kaidin	Rathwell	Voice	3
	Paul	Rostami	Piano	1
	Paul	Rostami	Piano	3
*	Evan	Sang	Piano	1
*	Evelyn	Shu	Piano	8
*	Alexander	Stirling	Piano	5
	Ayleen	Verdiyeva	Piano	1
	Ayla	Vukojevic Drought	Piano	2
	Jason	Wang	Piano	10
	Alexander	Xiao	Piano	7
	Emily	Yan	Piano	7

All performers will
receive a certificate

8 participants will
receive a cash
scholarship





Frances has been a big part of our board for many years and she has contributed countless hours and resources to this branch. Our members and their students have benefited from the planning and organizing that she has put into Branching Out events, North Student Recitals and much more. We will miss her smiling face and her sunny disposition at our board meetings and we wish her all the best in her upcoming projects.

Calgary Branch Board



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Thank You to the following members and staff who contributed to this issue

Gloria Chu
Frances Ewington
Peter Jancewicz
Nadia Khlynovskaya
Rachel McLellan
Beth Olver
Maryellen Pankratz
Barbara Robertson

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