



## MUSICAL BABY CHAIRS - Letter from the Editors

Rachel McLellan & Maryellen Pankratz

Rachel just had her second child, a little baby boy named Taron, so this topic seemed fitting!

Exposure to music plays a critical role in brain development, making early musical experiences especially important. Hearing is one of the first senses to develop, and even in infancy, the brain is capable of absorbing fundamental musical elements such as pitch, rhythm, and language. Research shows that very young children are highly responsive to musical stimuli, including changes in volume, tempo, movement, and melody.

When educators and caregivers sing with infants and young children, they are doing more than providing comfort or entertainment. These interactions actively support early speech and language development, stimulate cognitive growth, and strengthen social bonds. During the first two years of life, children are also developing an understanding of self in relation to their environment. Music-rich learning experiences accelerate language processing and help children distinguish subtle differences between sounds, a skill that is foundational to both musical and linguistic development. Music additionally serves as a powerful sensory and social tool, helping children recognize, express, and regulate emotions.

Musical environments also contribute significantly to neurological development. Engagement with music strengthens neural pathways throughout the brain, particularly within the corpus callosum (the structure responsible for communication between the brain's left and right hemispheres.) Studies suggest that early musical training enhances interhemispheric communication, which supports fine motor skills, sensory integration, and higher-order cognitive functioning. These neurological benefits reinforce the value of intentional, developmentally appropriate music instruction in early childhood settings.

Beyond cognitive gains, early music education supports the development of emotional intelligence. Skills cultivated through musical study, including patience, discipline, memory, and sustained attention, transfer to other areas of learning. Early formation of robust neural networks also increases the brain's capacity to retain information and may contribute to long-term cognitive resilience. As research in neuroscience and music education continues to expand, it is increasingly evident that musical instruction does more than develop musicianship: it plays a vital role in shaping the developing brain. ■

### Sources

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Note: The *Composer Corner* articles were compiled by the Editors

EVENT CALENDAR: <https://armta-calgary.com/event-calendar/#!event-list>

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# GREETING FROM THE CHAIR

Sandra Joy Friesen

On the heels of another successful ARMTA Calgary Recital & Awards (ACRA) event held January 31, I write this Chair's note with pride and happiness for all our dedicated students who work so diligently to achieve big musical goals, and with full gratitude for all our brilliant teachers steering these young minds and hearts to communicate confidently. With the Outstanding Student Recital (OSR) on February 28 and the Rotary Calgary Concerto Competition (RC3) coming up March 13-15, I encourage all teachers to consider planning for these annual opportunities for your students in 2027. And with festival season approaching, I also want to take this opportunity to wish all your students rewarding experiences in their festival classes and competitions.

Although 2026 is not a CFMTA National Conference year, please remember the ARMTA Calgary Branch offers Conference Grants to our teachers for other music conferences across the country and beyond, so don't hesitate to apply, or reach out if you have questions on applying for a grant. We want these funds to be used, and of course keep it in mind for the CFMTA 2027 conference in beautiful Wolfville, NS. On the topic of "member benefits" the Board

recently decided to waive first-year **Branch** fees for new members wanting to join, so please extend this information and invitation to teachers you know who are not already ARMTA Calgary Branch members. We want to keep growing in our membership. Continuing with good news, this past year our Branch has seen a big upswing in our sponsorships, with huge thanks to our new Sponsorship Convener, Andrea Case. If you know of businesses who are looking to advertise, reach out to me directly so that I can get them in touch with Andrea. More sponsorship for our Branch contributes greatly to all our programs!



Finally, a friendly reminder and call to everyone that the success of our Branch hinges on volunteers. This month, our fantastic ACRA Convener, Kimberly Yim, is stepping down, so this position is now vacant. Our Archives Convener position is also vacant. Plus, our cheerful

group of Board members always welcomes those who want to contribute as a Member-At-Large, to help us make intelligent decisions for our Branch. We need enthusiastic teachers to step forward to help all areas thrive, so please consider getting involved and contact me directly to discuss how you can contribute to an area that interests you. ■

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## Sir Edward Elgar 1857 – 1934

Edward Elgar was born in a village near the small city of Worcester in England. He was the fourth of seven children and the family lived above their music shop, Elgar Bros. His mother had a keen interest in the arts and his father, a skilled violinist and organist, tuned pianos and ran the music shop.

The young Elgar, therefore, had the great advantage of growing up in a practical musical atmosphere. He studied the music available in his father's shop and taught himself to play a wide variety of instruments. By the age of 8, he was taking formal lessons in both piano and violin. His mother played a significant role in nurturing his artistic interests, fostering a love for literature and the countryside, which would later permeate his compositions. Elgar began composing music at the age of 10 for a play written and performed by his siblings, showcasing his early talent. He completed school at age 15, all the while studying every music book and organ instruction manual he could get his hands on. He learned German in the hope of furthering his violin studies at Leipzig Conservatory but financial constraints prevented him from doing so.

During his teenage years, he became increasingly involved in local music groups, teaching and performing as a violinist. He also played the organ at St. George's Roman Catholic Church in Worcester. Elgar's first post as a conductor was once a week at the Worcester and County Lunatic Asylum. It wasn't until 1880 that he was able to take his first trip abroad, visiting Paris and then Leipzig two years later. During his trips he took every opportunity available to him to attend concerts in which top rate orchestras played the likes of Schumann, Brahms and Wagner. Schumann became a fast favourite with the young composer.

In 1889 at the age of 32, he married one of his pupils of three years, Caroline Alice Roberts. The coachman who drove Alice to and from piano lessons had remarked that he 'thought there was more to it than music', and he was right. She was the daughter of the late Major-General Sir Henry Roberts who had enjoyed a distinguished career with the British army in India. With both parents deceased, she married Edward in opposition to her extended family, who were semi-aristocratic. They considered that she was

marrying beneath herself, and in the days of strict class and religious divisions, she was cut out of several aunts' and uncles' wills.

But her faith in the composer was probably the main factor behind his success and played a vital part in the development of his career. For a long time, she saved him hours of drudgery, for instance by ruling bar lines on score paper. She walked miles in all weather to post parcels of manuscript and proofs. At times when success seemed forever to be eluding him, she never lost faith. In short, she had been the driving force behind his genius encouraging him and proclaiming his talents at every opportunity. It was upon Alice's suggestion that they moved to London to be closer to the music world and Edward devoted himself to composing full-time. Their only daughter was born in 1890 and the following year, the family was forced to move back to Worcester so that Edward could earn a living as a conductor.

His long struggle to establish himself as a composer was hard and often bitter. For many years he had to contend with apathy, with the prejudices of the entrenched musical establishment, with religious bigotry (he was a member of the Roman Catholic minority in a Protestant majority England) and with a late Victorian provincial society where class consciousness pervaded everything. He began building his reputation in the 1890s but his inability to make any significant income from his composing made Elgar depressed. His friend August Jaeger told him, "Your time of universal recognition will come". Jaeger was correct and in 1899 at the age of 42, Elgar wrote the Enigma Variations which were then premiered in London. His work gained positive reviews, being praised for its originality, charm and craftsmanship, and finally Elgar got the recognition he had long sought. He dedicated the piece "to my friends pictured within". At the start of the piece the main "enigma" theme is played, and this is followed by fourteen variations. Each of the variations is named after one of Edward's friends, often just using their initials or a code word (such as "Nimrod" or "Troyte"). This work showed that Elgar had surpassed the other leading English composers of his day, both in technical accomplishment and sheer force of musical personality.

Between 1901 and 1907, he wrote the first four (of six)

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Pomp and Circumstance marches. Elgar took the phrase "Pomp and Circumstance" from Shakespeare's Othello:

*'Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump, The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife, The royal banner, and all quality, Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!'*

The poet A.C. Benson was commissioned to write the words to the first march, which came to be known as "Land of Hope and Glory". The piece was later used at the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902. In July of 1904, Elgar was knighted at Buckingham Palace. Since then it has become one of England's national songs, and is often thought of as an alternative national anthem. By this time, his works were being performed both in Europe and in the USA.

Elgar wrote two symphonies between 1907 and 1911 while he was staying in Rome. Symphony No. 1 in A Flat was first performed in Manchester in December 1908. The piece was dedicated to and conducted by Hans Richter who said of it: "Gentlemen, let us now rehearse the greatest symphony of modern times, written by the greatest modern composer - and not only in this country". The work was received with tremendous enthusiasm and there were a hundred performances of it in Britain and all over Europe and in

America, Australia and Russia, etc.

The First World War depressed Elgar deeply. Between 1918 and 1919, he composed his last great work, the "Cello Concerto in E Minor". This is thought to be Elgar's lament on the First World War. The beautiful, elegiac melodies which can be seen as the composer's sorrow at the death and destruction caused by war and the passing of the world he had known and loved.

In 1920, his wife Alice passed and with her died much of his inspiration and will to compose. Throughout the 1920s, Elgar lived in virtual retirement, saddened by his bereavement and by the social and musical changes brought about by the war. He was content to live the life of a country gentleman in his beloved Worcestershire with his dogs, sometimes emerging for the occasional visit to London or for a conducting or recording assignment. In October 1933, Elgar was found to be suffering from a malignant tumour which pressed on the sciatic nerve. Further composition became impossible and he died on 23rd February, 1934. ■

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS** <http://armta-calgary.com/>

# 2025 Creative Video Competition Winners

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<https://armta-calgary.com/2025-video-project/>

## First Place

**Megan Fisher**  
“Old Irish Blessing” Voice and Piano  
*Student of Nathene Arthur*

The inspiration for my song choice and my video creation is my older sister. This summer, she moved away from home to begin University. My sister is my very best friend and the lyrics to this song are really appropriate for the parting that she and I recently went through. I also miss having her near me every day, but I want really good things for her.



## Second Place

**Olivia Chung**  
“Best Friends” Voice  
*Student of Gloria Chu*



I play both the male and female role in the skit. In the song performance, I sing the female solo with a backup male performer. This was inspired based on an experience that I had with a missing friendship bracelet with me and my bestie. I had a lot of fun working on this project and changing my role with the two characters. I enjoyed exploring the voice and discovering how changes in the vocal tract can change the voice. I experimented with the shape of the lips and larynx height to get the sound of the male character. It took me many tries but I learned a lot from this experience.

## Third Place

**Joshua Y.H. Au**  
“The Storm” Piano  
*Student of Cathy Leung*

Music and storms, both powerful forces of nature, often find parallels in artistic expression. Music can mimic the sounds of nature and reflect its rhythms and cycles. Similarly, storms, with their dramatic shifts in sound and intensity, can evoke powerful emotions and be a source of inspiration for musical compositions. I was inspired to perform this piece because it rained a lot this year in Calgary.



# Going Phishing in the Dark ~ Protect Yourself from Scams

by Maryellen Pankratz

Scams. Virtually every time we turn around, thieves and liars are trying to trick us out of our money. They are happy to bilk the elderly or an immigrant out of their life savings. Or corrupt all the data on our computers. And modern technology is on their side.

## Phishing

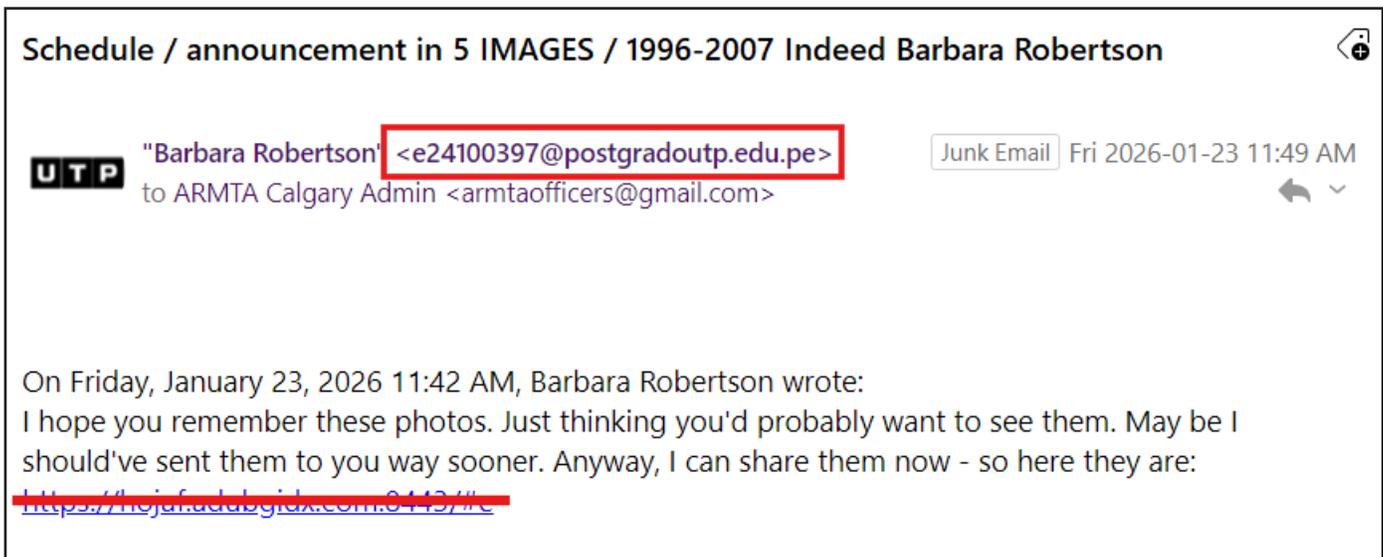
The internet is continuously being searched for contact names and email addresses by robots that can search huge amounts of data in seconds. As the Administrator for our branch, my junk box is full of fraudulent emails. Occasionally, some make it into my inbox. For instance, an email from "the Chair" asking for a chat. Curiosity has me wonder how their scam would work if I were to respond. Or asking me to send a payment for a service that I know we don't subscribe to. Sometimes they pose as a company, like QuickBooks and attach a fake invoice.

Here is a recent example of an email in my spam folder. It was sent by Barbara Robertson, right? We all know her and trust her. But notice the strange email address that it really came from. This is how we can be certain that it was NOT sent by Barb:

In addition to calls and email, expect to receive scams on your phone or tablet via text. I recently received a series of texts stating that my vehicle has outstanding parking violations. They threatened legal action if I failed to resolve the infractions with immediate payment. Fortunately, I knew this to be a hoax.

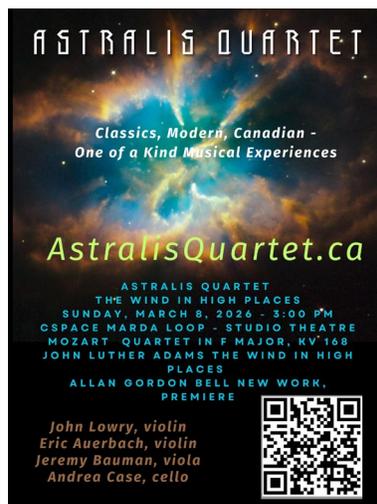
## Classified Ads

So, you're trying to sell your grandma's old china and you post an ad on Kijiji or on Facebook Marketplace. It's been weeks, so you're relieved when someone finally contacts you. They're ready to buy sight unseen and will pay the full price that you asked for. Your ad says cash only, but they insist on sending you an e-transfer so that you will hold the china for them until they can pick it up. If the buyer is a thief, here's what happens if you agree to their terms. You receive their e-transfer, but oops, "they accidentally" overpaid. That's right, OVER-paid. Now they want you to e-transfer the difference back to them right away. You do so, only to hear from your bank a few days later. The payment you received never cleared the bank and now you've also lost the money that you "refunded" to the thief.



Be skeptical of phone calls or emails that don't seem right. Any question or request that seems out of the ordinary or conveys a sense of urgency should be challenged. If you're uncertain, hang up, or don't reply to the email. Instead, start a new email to the person to ask them about it.

The easiest way to determine if an email is fraudulent is to verify the real sender. Click on the name of the person that the email came from at the top of the email. This will expand the area to show the actual address that it came from. If in doubt, don't click on links and don't open attachments. Doing so can infect computers with harmful malware.



## Website Spoofing

Phony websites are being fabricated, especially those that sell merchandise. Scrutinize the website before you buy something online, pay with your credit card, and never receive the product. URLs can be manipulated and designed to appear as legitimate websites. Be aware that entering sensitive personal information on compromised websites can lead to identity theft. Never make a purchase from an unsecure site; check the beginning of the URL to ensure that it contains a padlock symbol.

Bogus ads can appear on the internet, on



social media, or on search engines. If you see an ad for something that interests you, don't click on it. Instead, go to the website by typing in the address, or copying it from a reliable source and pasting it into the browser.

Never call a phone number that appears in a pop-up window. Scammers create bogus security warnings luring you to call a phone number for tech support. They will ask you for remote access to your computer, run a fake diagnostic test, then charge you to fix a problem that doesn't exist. Use a credible antivirus or security program on your computer. These should also be used to scan external drives, devices and USB thumb drives before using them.

### Voice Cloning

AI Technology makes it simple to clone a person's voice without their consent. The second victim receives an emergency phone call with valid caller ID. Their loved one frantically describes being kidnapped for ransom. Or they have been involved in a serious incident and need bail money fast.

Here's how it works. Scammers collect a few seconds of clear audio from social media, voicemail, or other sources. AI models analyze the voice's unique features—tone, pitch, cadence, and expression. It then generates a realistic voice replica capable of speaking new phrases naturally. Scammers use the cloned voice to make calls or send messages, impersonating the victim.

Protect yourself and your loved ones. Create a plan with close family members. Agree on a secret word, phrase, or

question that only you know. And always verify unexpected or urgent requests through other trusted communication channels. Sometimes it's as simple as contacting the person through another phone number.

### In Conclusion

Our members' brains are focused on music, speech arts, and lessons. But in the reality of today's world, we should all be on high alert, as anyone can fall victim to a scam. Always remember that the person on the other end of the line could easily be a criminal. No matter how immediate the situation sounds, never send money, gift cards, or crypto currency without first investigating it for yourself. ■

*Glossary of Terms  
on the next page!*

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## Glossary of Terms from “Phishing in the Dark”

**AI** (Artificial Intelligence) is technology that allows computer systems to perform tasks that typically require human traits, such as reasoning, problem-solving, learning, and decision-making.

**Junk or Spam Box** is a folder in your email service. It helps keep your inbox clean by filtering out suspicious messages. Where to find your spam folder? [Read this article.](#)

**Malware** is harmful software that’s installed on your device without your knowledge. Viruses, spyware, and ransomware are common types of malware.

**Pharming** is a malicious website that resembles a legitimate website, used to gather usernames and passwords.

**Phishing** is an email sent from an internet criminal disguised as an email from a legitimate, trustworthy source. The message is usually meant to lure you into revealing sensitive or confidential information. **Smishing** is the text version of this and **Vishing** is the phone version.

**Scam** involves deceit and a misrepresentation of fact, containing a set of elements that establish the crime of fraud. The Government of Canada has a lot information about this on their website <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/fraud-scams.html>.

**Spam** (also called junk) is unsolicited email, instant messages, or social media messages.

**Spear Phishing** occurs when criminals obtain information about you from websites or social networking sites, and customize a phishing scheme unique to you.

**Spoofing** describes a criminal who impersonates another individual or organization, with the intent to gather personal or business information.

**Voice Cloning** uses artificial intelligence (AI) to create realistic copies of a person’s voice from just a few seconds of recorded audio.

**URL** (Uniform Resource Locator) serves as a web address that tells your browser where to find content online, similar to how a street address helps locate a house.



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This competition honours 13-19 year old students who demonstrate commitment and excellence in two disciplines. The teens that entered our contest are truly phenomenal in their dedication. These youth are spending anywhere from 13 to 26 hours a week practicing, training, and participating in performances, festivals, championships, and tournaments. A couple of our students are even involved in a combo platter of music. That's in addition to their secondary discipline. Our applicants have received awards, medals, and trophies. They involve themselves in additional ARMTA-

related activities like composer competitions and youth orchestra. And if all that wasn't enough, half of them also volunteer their time at churches, retirement homes, even parades. They do all this quietly, expecting nothing in return.

After scouring through documentation submitted to support each application, our judges had some difficult decisions to make. Let's take a moment to thank the ARMTA volunteers who have silently judged the various recitals and competitions run by our organization over the years! ■



## Jessica Lu (Student of Colleen Athparia)

DISCIPLINES: Piano and Wushu

In the summer I was able to achieve my ARCT in piano performance. This exam had long been a significant goal for me, marking the culmination of my piano experiences and learning. Through many years of lessons and practice, I gradually developed my technique, musicality, and most notably, a love for the piano and music. I am very grateful to have received thoughtful teaching that shaped this dedication and inspired me to work towards this goal, ultimately allowing me to be successful and instilling a love for music in me.

Participating in Wushu and Taichi has taught me what it truly means to dedicate yourself to a discipline and what it means to give it your all on the competition mat. I have developed my strength, endurance, and flexibility through hours of training and regular practice. I have also improved my confidence and stability by performing around the city. I have competed and won awards at the National Championships and Can-am International Championships. I want to continue to push myself and continue to compete.

In this discipline I have also learned the value in being part of a community where there is constant support and encouragement, and where there are individuals that inspire me to be dedicated and disciplined. I am happy to be able to partake in these two disciplines and for the opportunity to apply for this award.



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Jury: Zhenni Li-Cohen, Daniel Scholz, Rolf Bertsch

# Aiden Wong (Student of Fiona Carnie)

DISCIPLINES: Violin and Badminton



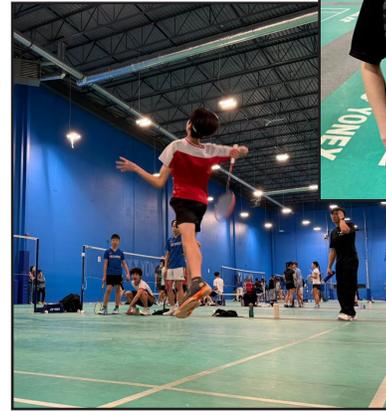
From a young age, musical values always sparked my interest, as I was later introduced to musical instruments such as the violin and piano. I was fortunate to be placed in childhood music program, Kodaly program, which helped me develop a musical sense. At the age of seven, I started taking violin lessons, later joining the Amici Strings Program. Currently, I am still an active member of this program, as it has helped me work in an ensemble through chamber music. I am also a member of the Calgary Youth Orchestra.



Outside of my musical activities, badminton has also been an important part of my life. Training 3-4 times a week at a competitive level has influenced me to face troubles under pressure and to make decisions on the go. The commitment I made to this sport, most importantly, taught me to focus on a specific goal and to not get distracted along the way. This also pushed myself forward to not only perform well in a certain activity, but to keep a balanced lifestyle with school, music, and physical activity.



My dedication to these activities has been evident from 2024-2025, as I have accomplished RCM level 10 violin exam, RCM level 10 Music History, and ARCT Keyboard Harmony. And my growth in badminton has been shown through the intensity and commitment, eventually getting to compete in provincial-level tournaments.



With these “hobbies”, I have also learnt how to use aspects from one activity to another. For example, I understood how you can find your own rhythm while playing badminton. These teachings and morals learnt from each aspect have developed and improved me: striving to be a better version of myself every day. ■



# Anjali Datta (Student of Frances Ewington)

DISCIPLINES: Speech Arts and Water Lifesaving

This year I performed at the Royal Conservatory National Celebration of Excellence as a Gold medalist for Grade 9 Speech Arts. The nerves that hit me as I walked up to the stage felt exactly the same as they did before my first ever practical exam, completed over zoom as a sixth grader during the pandemic. Although public speaking feels no less daunting, I can now confidently say that I am a very different person than the scared little girl who used to cry before every performance. Speech Arts has challenged me, and with every opportunity to improve at my discipline, my confidence has increased. If I can recite Shakespeare in front of a hundred people, then I can just as easily present my final biology project to my class.

I was also not a natural swimmer. In fact, I failed Salamander 5 times! In the same way that I didn't just become a natural performer over night, learning a new technique in the pool required discipline and practice. The habits and skills learned through Speech Arts have also allowed me to excel in the water as a competitive lifesaving swimmer. At a height of five foot nothing, I don't exactly intimidate the other swimmers in my heats. Being smaller than my competition, means training harder, longer and better, similarly to overcoming my shy disposition in Speech Arts. Any level of competitive sport requires quick-thinking, reflexes and dedication, but most importantly, resilience under pressure. By forcing myself to perform under stress in both speech arts and swimming, I have learned how to adapt, manage my nerves and communicate confidently. Both speech arts and swimming have allowed me to grow and without either of them I wouldn't be the athlete or the performer that I am today. ■



# Honourable Mentions

## DUAL EXCELLENCE TEENAGE SUPERSTARS!



### Max Chen

(Student of Alicia Romero)  
Piano and Karate



My passion for piano stems from the sense of musicality formed by my early introduction to piano at the age of five and my consistent commitment to it. Under the guidance of my teacher and parents, I earned my RCM Level 8 with First Class Honours certificate in 2025. In addition, learning music theory and combining it with the inspiration of life with love, I composed multiple pieces and participated in the ARMTA student composer competitions for four consecutive years. After receiving honourable mentions for 3 years, I was honoured to receive the 2nd place award in 2025. Also, I have learned to play piano not only from music sheets, but also by ear and improvisation, allowing me to create melodies and arrange harmonies. I share this skill with others through volunteering. Every two weeks, I perform a repertoire of 12 new pieces for senior residents and every time, I am greeted with smiles that remind me of how music brings us together and why I choose to play.

In addition to advancing skills in piano, I also train hard in Karate and aim to improve myself in every training. I have been practicing since I was seven and joined the high-level competitive stream in 2023, training 15+ hours a week and participating in tournaments. In 2025, I attained silver medal in Karate Alberta Provincial Tournament and became a member of the provincial team for the 2nd consecutive year. I represented Alberta in the 2025 Karate Canada National Championships and recently represented Canada at the 59th Wado-Kai National Championships and the 2025 Wado-Kai International Cup in Japan. In a division of 23 athletes, I was able to attain 5th place in the International Cup. ■

Dancing and singing are more than just passions for me. From a young age, I was drawn to the movement and melody of my body and over the years, I have put in countless hours to make myself grow. Dance has taught me to be persistent when things become difficult. Whether I'm rehearsing my routine or learning a new skill, I understand that progress can take time and repetition. In every class, I set goals for myself, even if it's one more rotation in my pirouette or getting my leg 3 inches higher in my leg lift. Dance has also given me the confidence to express myself through my body when words cannot.

Singing and piano, on the other hand, have helped me develop ways of storytelling an emotion. Singing has helped push me out of my comfort zone to find my voice. I try to connect to the message of each song and deliver that emotion to the audience. Through music and dance, I've learned to be patient and to take baby steps. Some days might be more difficult than others, but I always try to give my 100% so that I can continue to grow. ■

### Megan Fisher

(Student of Nathene Arthur)  
Voice & Piano and Dance



### Arwen Au-Yeung (Student of Gloria Chu) Piano & Violin and Orchestra/Wind Ensemble

I have been playing piano since I was 5 years old and violin since I was 6. Though I took a break for a couple of years, exploring them more as I was older made me love to play them even more. I have enjoyed working through the RCM levels as well as doing other unrelated projects and pieces. My sister does voice lessons and we sometimes will do duets where I am either her accompaniment on the piano or playing the main melody with her on the violin. With piano specifically I have worked on a number of compositions which contribute to a series based off of the seasons. So far I have completed A Fall Day, When Summer Comes, and The Spring Rain. Playing these instruments, especially the violin are definitely a challenge for me but the challenge only

makes the results so much more rewarding. For example, when I finish a performance from memory, or the feeling after I finished an exam after preparing for months.

I have also been doing orchestras with Ms. Phoebe Chan since I was in grade 5. Though I started playing violin 4 over the years, I ended up switching to Clarinet 1 in the orchestra. CYWCE was every Monday for two hours in the evening and was similar to an honour band. We did have to try out for it and the pieces we played were a higher grade level than I usually had in my regular high school band. It took a lot of practice and on top of the regular wind ensemble there was also an additional orchestra which I also played in on Sunday afternoons. ■

# Salut D'Amour

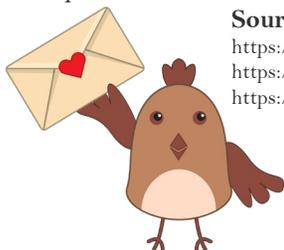
## COMPOSER CORNER

### Edward Elgar

Edward set to music a poem that Alice had written to him upon their engagement in 1888 called "Love's Grace". When he entered the piece into a composing competition, he won himself a rather useful £5 (Around £2,600 in today's equivalent). Originally called Liebesgruss, or "Love's greeting", it was translated into French on the advice of the publisher. Edward and Alice both spoke good German but French, they suggested, would sell better. And sell, it did; it was one of his most famous compositions in his lifetime. The cottage in which Elgar was born in Lower Broadheath, near Worcester, is now a museum in his honour. Amongst the rich archive of his life is the piece that confirmed their relationship: Salut D'Amour.

Although short in duration, Elgar's Salut d'Amore is plished with sweet melodies and poignant harmonies. The first public performance was a small orchestral version in November 1889 at Crystal Palace in South London. Driven by love, Elgar's feelings about his fiancé shine through. The dedication in French read "Carice", a combination of his wife's first and middle names, Caroline Alice. Carice was then used to name their daughter who was born two years later.

Search the internet for a video of "Salut D'Amour" and have a listen to this beautiful piece! ■



#### Sources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/>  
<https://www.classicfm.com/>  
<https://classicalexburns.com/>



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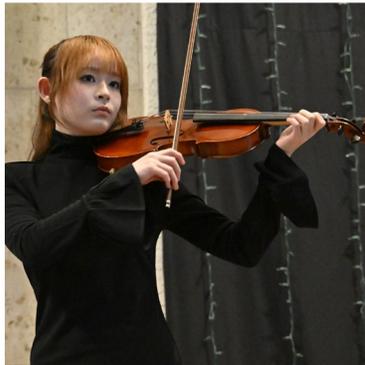
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*Kaylee Read, Master of Ceremonies for Recital*



*Awards Presented by Chair, Sandra Joy Friesen*



**Proud Teachers of This Year's Winners**

Colleen Athparia  
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Gloria Chu  
Kathy Dornian  
Frances Ewington  
Lisa Kiernan

Nadia Khlynovskaya  
Linda Kundert  
Kaylee Read  
Allen Reiser  
Peter Rudzik

Lorna Sewell  
Carolyn Steeves  
Serena Yeung  
Kimberley Yim

To see all the students who won awards, click [HERE](#) to view the recital programme

## An Evening at ACRA by Nathene Arthur

My husband Rick and I arrived early on January 31st at the Temple B'Nai Tikvah in SW Calgary. The venue felt small enough that it wasn't intimidating. We brought our sound system and helped set it up. Then we signed in at the reception desk, received our programs, and proceeded to the seating area. Everyone was dressed up and we watched singers, pianists, cellists, and violinists perform. The 2-hour program was run by ARMTA volunteers and led by our beautiful, MC, Kaylee Read. I liked that prizes were given out both mid-way and at the end.

Although I have had singing students win ACRA scholarships, it was the first time I attended as a recipient and a participant. As the solo Speech Arts performer, and by far the oldest person on the stage, it brought back memories of seeing students from the past 40-plus years who received these awards. This made me wonder where they are, and what they are doing now. Kind of nostalgic. As a student of Speech Arts teacher Frances Ewington, it is an honour to be recognized for my efforts. And reciting the last third of "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson was great practice for my upcoming RCM 10 exam later this year.

Thanks to everyone for setting up this concert. With the guidance and inspiration of our members, we will continue to study and grow in our different disciplines. ■



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## Music is an Art by Max Chen

Music is an art. For me, music is the best way to express myself and composing elevates the freedom of expression. Just like narratives with their action-packed storytelling, and visual arts with stunning techniques, music is an art, with the ability to evoke emotion. It tells a story, conveys meaning, and allows the performer to put their own thoughts into the piece. It wields the power to bring joy and break barriers connecting through a mutual language. The composer can determine the overall theme of the book, but the performer can further interpret the idea for the composer. What blended perfectly is composing and playing, which gave me the tools to fully develop the piece.

The idea for my first composition was planted into my head while drawing. It was a simple sketch of a cube, just for experience with perspectives and shading. But it was able to spark my imagination. I borrowed my parent's phone, fired up GarageBand, and started hitting keys that sounded like the notes in my head. The piece itself was simple, two 8 bar phrases for opening and closing and a small interlude in the middle. The whole piece would not have been longer than a minute, but that was enough to convey the sense of peacefulness for me.



Music can come from anywhere. For me, it is from experiences, recollections of memories associated with songs, and most importantly, experimentation. Most of my playing on the piano resides not with exam pieces but simply arranging pop songs and trying out new melodies. Paraphrasing and remixing pieces allowed me to get a better grasp of the nuances of the piece, and to truly make it my own. For example, famous composer Franz Liszt was famous for his piano arrangement of La Campanella, originally written for solo violin by Niccolò Paganini. Noticing the intricate details of the many layers contained within every song can give insight into the emotion it conveys. For me, one of the most important tools I use to compose pieces is a recorder, to capture the fleeting ideas. I recorded every cadence and melody regardless of whether it was

[Click Here](#)  
to listen to Max's piece!



going to make it to the final piece. In addition, I recorded experiments on how to recreate a violin on piano and other instruments, which gave me experience with techniques. Most of the time, an idea that is formed is based off a fleeting experience. Every idea is valuable, so recording or writing it down was essential.

Experimenting and recording eventually laid the foundations for the piece that won me second place in ARMTA's 2025 Student Composer Composition. The piece itself conveys a journey, with ups and downs, and used many independent sections that I had recorded. It represents fluidity, just like a dream. The opening sequence was meant to be surreal, with layers gradually adding on. There are many time signature changes and a large range of octaves used to represent the fluidity of a dream. As for dynamics and pedal, there are no definite markings. This piece relies heavily on interpretation, which I feel are best reflected by the performer's choices based on their experience. Many sections contain their own peak before settling down once again to continue. Finally, the end is a modification of the original opening, changing a chord from a minor key to its relative major. It functions as a resolution, reflecting the beginning. It showcases the correlation between language arts and music arts. A similar plot structure for stories is the Hero's Journey. This involves the main character travelling on a journey but eventually returning home, which my piece reflects.

Thanks to my brilliant piano teacher, Ms. Alicia Romero, and my parents, who shaped my foundation in piano, which is the key to my musicality. I am very grateful for their unwavering support and constant encouragement in expanding my technique and composing. I hope my experience motivates you to cherish every idea, in any form, be it writing, composing, or drawing. It may just become the next greatest work. ■

2026 Creative  
Story Competition  
Deadline April 5



Students of our teachers are invited to create a fictional short story written about a piece of music or speech arts that they are studying. Entries will be categorized into one of three age groups and 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes will be awarded...PLUS \$40 random draws!

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# Communication Can Make All the Difference

by Dr. Merlin Thompson

For most music teachers, the first encounter with parents typically occurs when they inquire—by phone or email—about music lessons for their child. This initial exchange can be pivotal as it has the potential to either encourage parents to move forward or quietly dissuade them from further involvement. And it can be especially challenging because parents’ reasons for seeking music lessons vary widely. Consider the following scenarios:

Parent A: “I just want my child to have fun learning to play the piano. We’ll give it a try for two years, and if it’s not fun, we’ll move on to another activity.”

Parent B: “My child struggles with concentration, so I think the discipline of learning the piano would be very beneficial.”

Parent C: “I want my child to complete upper-level RCM examinations for extra credit in high school. That will be our primary goal.”

How should music teachers respond when parental expectations differ from their own teaching philosophy or goals? Is it wise to suggest that another teacher might be a better fit? And what kind of communication best serves both the family and the teacher?

Several years ago, I conducted a workshop on communication for studio music teachers. When I asked participants to describe the qualities of effective communicators, there was unanimous agreement: effective communication depends on two interrelated skills—listening and speaking. However, when participants were asked to

apply these skills to the scenarios above, it became clear many of them felt that listening was primarily a means of formulating persuasive arguments to challenge or correct parents’ perspectives. They completely missed the point that listening means making the effort to genuinely understand where parents are coming from, so that teachers can build upon—rather than dismantle—their viewpoints.

Each of the scenarios above highlights a single aspect of music learning, yet each provides a valid and meaningful reason for enrolling a child in music lessons. The question, then, is how teachers can respond in ways that respect parental perspectives without compromising their own professional values.

I suggest responding with the following: “That’s a great starting point. Let’s get going.” I say this with confidence, knowing that by acknowledging parents’ intentions, I begin the relationship with their support rather than resistance. As their child’s musicianship develops, I make a point of showing how my instruction connects to their original goals, while also illuminating dimensions of musical growth they may not have anticipated. In this way, I don’t abandon my teaching philosophy to accommodate parental expectations. Instead, I use those expectations as fertile ground for cultivating a rich, expansive, and long-term musical journey for the student.

For effective communication, active listening and sensitive speaking can make all the difference. In what ways do your first conversations with parents communicate respect for their goals and confidence in your own teaching philosophy? What’s your takeaway from this article? ■



## Adult Student Recital Feb 8, 2026

Kaylee Read was proud to host another Adult Student Recital this February. The afternoon was filled with music, food, and community at the cozy Cornerstone Cafe. The program included fantastic performances by adult students currently studying voice, piano, and clarinet with ARMTA Calgary Teachers. Learning an instrument requires dedication and persistence, which can be challenging with the pressures of career and family. This event allows us to celebrate life-long music makers who are still finding a place for music in their lives despite other commitments. ARMTA Calgary Branch values our adult students and will continue to offer performance opportunities for them. Stay tuned for information on our next Adult Student Event! Those interested in further community events, be sure to check out the Adults Learning Music Support Group. Visit <https://www.adultslearningmusic.com/> for more information. ■



To celebrate the new year, branch member Colleen Athparia has published her latest book of piano pieces called *THUMBS UP: The Texting Pianist!* About 2 years ago, after seeing joggers texting, she got the idea of writing music for thumbs only. Her hope is that students and teachers alike will have fun with these creative pieces while improving their thumb skills in pieces ranging from Levels 3 to 7. Advanced students will also enjoy the challenge of sight-reading some of these. Her colleague, Irene Johansen has written a review on the following page. ■



### The Texting Pianist

*Colleen Athparia*

*Irene Johansen is a Calgary based musician, teacher, composer and conductor, (mostly) retired. She received a B.Mus from the University of Calgary and an MA Queens College CUNY in New York City. She's a past member of the Calgary Philharmonic Chorus, The Next Stage (NYC) and Opera Anonymous (Toronto). She is also an associate member of the Canadian Music Centre.*

### **THUMBS UP is available for purchase at:**

[www://athparia.armta.ca](http://www://athparia.armta.ca)

### **Pieces Include:**

ThumBoogie (Level 3-4)  
 Thumbby Trot (Level 4)  
 Stretching (Level 4)  
 Thumb Chase (Level 4)  
 The Curious Gopher (Level 4-5)  
 Mountain Climbing (Level 4-5)

Thlipping and Thliding (Level 4-5)  
 Feathery Wings (Level 5-6)  
 Mystical Mountains (Level 6-7)  
 Kangaroo Thumbs (Level 7-8)  
 Thumb-Melody (Level 8)  
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## “THUMB’S UP: the Texting Pianist” Colleen Athparia

# BOOK REVIEW *by Irene Johansen*

Colleen Athparia's *Thumbs Up* introduces us to a new way of thinking about our thumbs in a musical context. While I can only explore a few of twelve offerings here, I encourage everyone to read through them all, including the two additional pieces available online.

As a composer, I appreciate attention to detail. Colleen has been mindful of giving shape and nuance to music that could have been pedantic and heavy, given the subject matter. The result is a delightful, magical musical journey, amazingly complex and complete, using only thumbs. Sometimes humorous, sometimes serious, sometimes wistful, these pieces have made me more aware of my thumbs than I've ever been.

"Feathery Wings" is light and airy, taking the thumbs to places they rarely get to go on their own. "ThumBoogie" speaks for itself. Add a little swing and you're good to go. "Kangaroo Thumbs", in addition to the necessary hopping and jumping, contains some surprising voice leading that you may want to look for and bring out.

In "Thumby Trot" I found flow, voices, range and rhythms that remind me of breathing, shallow, then deepening, sometimes erratic. "s t r e t c h I n g" has plenty of space to move in and explore.

I can't help but think of the whack-a-mole games at the Stampede when playing "Curious Gopher", especially as the frenzy increases, reminiscent of ever more frantic attempts to catch a rodent in a hole. In a complete change of pace, "Mystical Mountains"'s atmospheric texture takes you to another world in which an elf, or maybe a hobbit might appear. Fourths and fifths blend and swirl into unexpected crevices and peaks within "vast spaces". "Singing Thumbs" is a lyrical, multi-voiced ode to a surprising digit.

These days, with our thumbs in constant motion scrolling, tapping, holding, most of us can identify with the theme of this collection. It could have been kitschy, but I think young and older learners alike will find this a refreshing take on something we do everyday without thinking about it. It's obvious that much thought and care went into creating musically interesting and pedagogically useful pieces for strengthening our thumbs, and teaching them to lighten up, too! Lessons learned here could even lead to better awareness of the rest of the hands, body, even the whole musical experience generally.

All in all, a musically satisfying, clever and engaging collection. ■

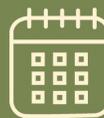


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MAY 28 - VILLAGE SESSIONS WITH KATE STEVENS. 8PM, VILLAGE BREWERY  
MAY 31 - STRANGE NEW WORLDS: WORLD PREMIERES WITH SOLOIST ADAM ZINATELLI. 3PM, ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

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## We Are Equally Divided by Lorne Pankratz

The perfect “octave” is the only interval, aside from the unison, that is found in all the tuning and temperament systems in the world. It is also one of the simplest. In order to play the upper octave of a given pitch, a 2:1 ratio is employed, meaning that a single string divided in half will produce its upper octave on either side of the divide.

The perfect octave itself can also be separated into other intervals. In the tradition of modern western music, the octave has been divided into twelve parts. This contrasts with the Renaissance, where the octave could be expressed in nineteen or even thirty-one parts. Even today, some cultures have five, seven, or even nine-note equal temperaments while modern composers have utilized divisions up to ninety-six!

Under its traditional usage the octave, broken into its familiar twelve equal parts, is simply known as “equal temperament.” (The designation “temperament” denotes an interval or tuning system that has deviated from its pure or “just” form.) For example, a major third interval played on a freshly-tuned piano is still not in absolute tune; it remains sharper than pure. But the trade off is that we can play in

any key, major or minor, with the same amount of distortion which has become tolerable to our ears.

So how sharp is that major third?

Equal temperament is expressed mathematically as the twelfth-root of two. The perfect octave is 1200 cents apart with each equal semitone 100 cents from the other. The major third in our example is 14 cents or  $14/100$  of a semitone sharper than just. Thus, whenever a pianist plays any major third on a piano, it will be automatically greater than pure. Not all intervals are sharp, however. The perfect fifth is close to being just, being only two cents lower, but a minor third is almost 16 cents flatter than pure. Therefore, the difference between a major triad and its tonic minor becomes much more stark in equal temperament than it would be in a more just intonation.

Many new digital pianos have tuning and temperament presets. As an experiment, try playing in  $1/4$ -comma meantone with its pure major thirds or “just intonation” with all its intervals pure, and then go back to equal temperament. You might be surprised! ■

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Cassa's in-person and online programs run throughout July and culminate in showcases and performances that highlight participant growth. These programs are crafted for learners of all ages and experience levels — from beginners to advanced students — and are led by award-winning instructors and guest artists.

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#### *Cassa Musical Theatre (July 23, 24, 27, 28, 29 & 30)*

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- **Inclusive Community:** Cassa is a registered charity committed to making high-quality arts education accessible. Bursaries and grants are available for students who might otherwise be unable to attend.
- **Cross-Disciplinary Growth:** From composition to improvisation, and from solo study to ensemble work, these programs support holistic artistic development.

Visit <https://www.cassamusicalarts.com> to explore full program details, registration timelines, and bursary options — and consider sharing these opportunities with your students and teaching networks well before early-bird deadlines.

*Let this summer be an inspiring chapter in your students' musical journey!*



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