



Report to the Community

2023/2024

VSO

VANCOUVER
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

VSO
SCHOOL
OF MUSIC



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VSO SCHOOL OF MUSIC
Donors



A Message from the Music Director

Dear music lovers,

As I look back upon this past year, I'm consistently reminded of the incredible richness of music and its capacity to move and inspire our community. From classical Masterworks concerts at the Orpheum, to free concerts with Symphony at Sunset and Day of Music, the musicians of the VSO shared their incredible artistry to touch the lives of so many across the Lower Mainland.

I had the privilege of opening and closing our season with two profound works by Mahler. Mahler Symphony No. 6 and *Das Lied von der Erde*. In between, we took our audiences on a thrilling musical journey full of surprises. The orchestra not only excelled at presenting works by some of the greatest composers of the past, including a personal favourite – Prokofiev, but we are always excited to explore new works and less familiar repertoire, finding a way to the hearts of our audiences. I fondly remember conducting the BC premiere of John Adams' *Harmonielehre* which was very well received by our audiences.

This past season, we had the honour of welcoming some of the world's top soloists to Vancouver. Yo-Yo Ma, Steven Isserlis, Augustin Hadelich, Sarah Chang, Vadim Gluzman, and so many more. I was also excited to pass the baton to some remarkable guest conductors, Leonard Slatkin, Anna Rakitina, Shiyeon Sung, Joann Falletta, Gemma New, and others. The excellence of our orchestra, soloists, guest conductors and artistic curation together create irresistible musical experiences for our audiences.

The VSO School of Music continues to grow, inspiring the next generation of musicians through our excellent faculty and programming. We are one of the few orchestras in the world to have our very own school, and I'm so proud of the achievements of our talented students, and encouraged by the tireless inspirational energy and dedication of our faculty.

This past spring, I was delighted to renew my contract as Music Director of the VSO and Artistic Advisor to the School through 2030. We've accomplished so much together already, and I look forward to growing even more together, and reaching new goals and heights with our fantastic musicians, faculty and students.

Vancouver is home to some of the most beautiful natural surroundings in the world, and our city can be equally proud to have its very own world-class symphony orchestra. It's been such a pleasure attending local events in the community and connecting with so many of you.

Our 2024/25 season is well underway, and I'm especially excited for the National Tour in March. I can't wait to showcase our remarkable orchestra and students to audiences across Canada and hope to see you soon in the concert hall.

Otto Tausk

Music Director, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (Alan and Gwendoline Pyatt Podium)
Artistic Advisor, VSO School of Music



A Message from the President & CEO



As I reflect on the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and VSO School of Music's 2023/24 year, I can't help but smile. Why? Because we, the musicians, staff, donors, directors, subscribers, and stakeholders, have come together in our unwavering belief in the power of music – its ability to touch our emotions, foster community, and elevate our spirits.

This past year has been filled with numerous highlights, including our first-ever Gala held in the Orpheum Theatre. We also celebrated our inaugural partnership with Arts Umbrella, the Audain Foundation, and the Vancouver Art Gallery in a performance of *Riopelle Symphonique*. We were thrilled to provide thousands of community members with free access to the VSO through initiatives such as Day of Music, Symphony at Sunset, Symphony at Deer Lake, TD Connecting Communities Concert, and The Path Forward, an event thoughtfully curated by our remarkable Indigenous Council. Our commitment to accessibility and affordability shines through these community engagement initiatives.

We also had the unique opportunity to host esteemed guest artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Sarah Chang, Vadim Gluzman, as well as distinguished guest conductors Anna Rakitina, JoAnn Falletta, Gemma New, and many others. Under the baton of our magnificent Music Director, Maestro Tausk, the orchestra has never sounded better. Bravi Maestro and musicians of the VSO!

Looking ahead, 2023/24 has allowed us to plan our Canadian tour, slated for March 2025. This tour is particularly special due to the diverse repertoire and the involvement of guest artists Stewart Goodyear, Vadim Gluzman, and Marion Newman. It will also feature Sinfonietta, the VSO School of Music's advanced string orchestra, accompanying the VSO – a true testament to our belief in the value of music education.

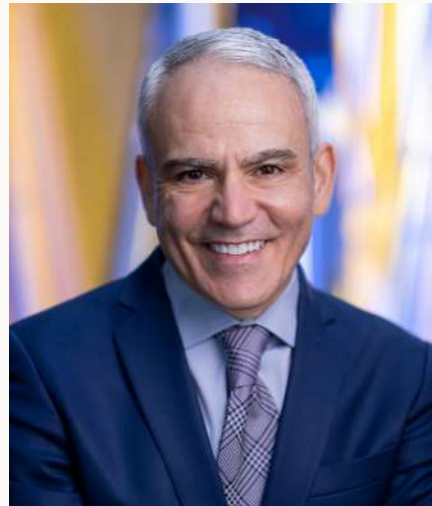
I am incredibly proud of both organizations and the beauty we bring to our world. My heartfelt gratitude goes to our VSS Chair, David Garofalo, whose limitless vision and dedication inspire us all. I extend equal gratitude to Elisabeth Finch, Chair of the VSO School of Music, whose belief in our school motivates me daily.

To our directors – your dedication and countless volunteer hours are invaluable. Thank you. To the staff – I am fortunate to work with the best Senior Management Team imaginable and staff whose joy and enthusiasm uplift me every day. You all inspire me to strive for excellence in serving the VSO and VSO School of Music, for which I am deeply grateful.

To you – our community – we thank you for your trust and ongoing support. Sincere gratitude.

Angela Elster, President & CEO
Vancouver Symphony Orchestra & VSO School of Music

A Message from the Vancouver Symphony Society Board Chair



I was given the unique privilege of taking the role as Chair of the Board of the Vancouver Symphony Society partway through our incredibly successful 105th season. Angela Elster, our President & CEO, and Otto Tausk, our Music Director, delivered an artistic tour de force that resonated with our devoted patrons, subscribers, ticket buyers, volunteers and generous donors. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank our talented world-class musicians and dedicated staff for delivering a season of which they can be truly proud. Their performances again raised the bar for what will be an even better 106th season that will include a National tour and recording.

I want to extend a special thanks to our volunteer board of directors. They bring wise counsel to Angela's energetic and professional leadership team. They also devote countless hours out of their personal time to help organize major events like our annual gala, connect with and cultivate major donors, and attend numerous performances.

Like many of you, I am an enthusiastic patron of and volunteer to the VSO and we can all be proud of our symphony, which is one of the most iconic and successful orchestras in North America.



David Garofalo, Board Chair
Vancouver Symphony Society

A Message from the VSO School of Music Board Chair



Your VSO School of Music Board has been delighted by the exciting growth of the VSO SoM in the 2023/24 season, and we continue to be amazed by the talent of our students! We know that the development of this talent is happening in a unique and very special place: the only music school in Canada that is integrated with a major symphonic orchestra. Working with the VSO we create unique experiences and opportunities for our students, and our students respond with delight and brilliance.

I'll share three of the occasions when I saw for myself the brilliance of this integration during the 2023/24 season. First, the VSO SoM's Sinfonietta on the Orpheum stage, led by VSO Concertmaster Nicholas Wright and performing Haydn, Nielsen and Mozart alongside five other VSO musicians. Second, seeing VSO Assistant Concertmaster David Lakirovich coaching ensembles at the Camp Elphinstone weekend.

Third, watching the final of the Future of Excellence Competition in

May. Wan Cheung (Jimmy) Lee, a piano student of Bogdan Dulu, and Stella Tan, violin student of Vinh Nguyen, wowed the audience and impressed the judging panel which included Maestro Otto Tausk, Grace Huang and David Lakirovich. Wan Cheung Lee took the senior prize and Stella Tan took the junior prize.

The combination of VSO School of Music and VSO has created a musical development powerhouse. Thank you for your interest in this special place and for any and all support you give to help us reach more students with this unique experience.



Elisabeth Finch, Board Chair
VSO School of Music



Yo-Yo Ma and Otto Tausk
Yo-Yo Ma with the VSO, Sep 8, 2023

VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Artistic Highlights

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's 2023/24 concert season launched with a dazzling special event that welcomed the world renowned cellist, Yo-Yo Ma, alongside Maestro Otto Tausk. Dvořák's Cello concerto received an astonishing performance in what the artist describes as "an astounding piece of music". Opening an unforgettable evening, the VSO pulled out all the stops with Tchaikovsky's dramatic and magnificent Fifth Symphony.

Throughout the season we were introduced to memorable new works from such international composers as Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Missy Mazzoli, Alissa Firsova, John Adams and Britta Byström, alongside brilliant Canadian compositions from Cassandra Miller, Kelly-Marie Murphy, Dorothy Chang, Michael Oesterle, and Zosha Di Castri. The world premiere of BC composer Nicholas Ryan Kelly's *Earth, Beloved* set the stage for one of the most epic works of the Twentieth Century, John Adams' *Harmonielehre*, as Maestro Tausk and the VSO continue their exploration of this great composer's works.

Our 2023/24 season also welcomed many of the leading guest soloists and conductors on the stage today. Highlights included performances from acclaimed violinist Vadim Gluzman in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, British cellist Steven Isserlis with Elgar's Cello Concerto, and Shostakovich's riveting First Violin Concerto with Paul Huang. The season also featured fabulous performances from VSO's Christie Reside, Hung-Wei Huang, Henry Shapard, Nicholas Wright and Vern Griffiths who took to the podium to lead our Pops Special, *Prohibition*, and a brilliant new work for kids entitled, *What Do YOU Play?*

Maestro Tausk welcomed several guest conductors to the podium, including brilliant performances from Anna Rakitina, Shiyeon Sung, Tianyi Lu,

Gemma New and JoAnn Falletta. Internationally-renowned conductor, Leonard Slatkin, made a much anticipated visit to Vancouver with a musical journey to sun-drenched Spain. VSO's principal cello Henry Shapard and principal viola Hung-Wei Huang joined Maestro Slatkin in a stunning reading of Richard Strauss' *Don Quixote*, with Henry interpreting the role of the titular knight and Hung-Wei as Sancho Panza!

From *Elf in Concert* to *Star Wars*, Movie Nights with the VSO presented by Telus, continues to captivate audiences in a larger-than-life experience. With the ongoing support of series sponsor London Drugs, VSO Pops welcomed audiences with *Queens of Soul*, *Star Wars: A Galaxy Far, Far Away*, *Music of Motown*, and many more! The VSO's RBC Assistant Conductor David Bui took the lead on both our OriginO Kids Concerts Series, as well as PARC Retirement Living Tea & Trumpets. Always an audience favourite, Tea & Trumpets' host Christopher Gaze continued to regale audiences over a series of six concerts.



Vadim Gluzman
Maestro Tausk & Vadim Gluzman, May 31, 2024

Philanthropy at a Glance

We are grateful to our community of individuals, corporations, small businesses, foundations, and government that collectively provide invaluable financial support to help sustain our diverse and innovative programming. Thanks to their investments, the VSO was able to provide exceptional musical experiences, music education, and community engagement initiatives throughout our 2023/24 season.

INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Over 3,000 individuals generously supported the VSO with an annual, monthly, or added donation at the time of their ticket purchase. Many were inspired to do so because of several matching gifts we received. We extend special thanks to The R & J Stern Family Foundation, Mr. Gerald McGavin, CM, OBC, and an anonymous donor who collectively contributed \$145,000 in matching funds.

CORPORATE GIVING

The VSO is grateful to all our new and renewing corporate partners who support the many projects and special initiatives we undertake each season. Whether through sponsorship dollars or corporate philanthropic gifts, these investments not only help us financially, but further elevate our brand throughout the city, province, and beyond. Many of our corporate partners have been supporting us for well over 25 years in the performing arts sector. This speaks to the strong alignment and understanding of the vital role the VSO and the business community play in fostering healthy and thriving communities.

POWER OF MUSIC GALA

Over 450 guests attended our inaugural Power of Music Gala held at the Orpheum. Hosted by Coleen Christie and Geena Jackson, along with auctioneer Fred Lee, Gala guests were treated to a visually stunning transformation of the Orpheum. The evening raised over \$800,000 to directly benefit the VSO and VSO School of Music. Guests enjoyed performances by the VSO, students from

the VSO School of Music, and The Tenors, who were honoured with a Gold Baton Award along with RBC Regional President, BC, Martin Thibodeau, who received a Gold Baton Award for Corporate leadership. We sincerely appreciate the members of the Power of Music Gala committee, attendees, and the many sponsors and donors for their support.

LEGACY GIVING

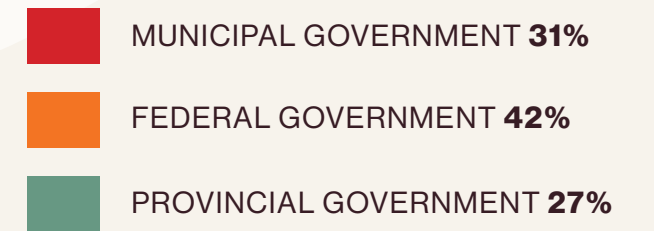
We welcomed several new members to the Stradivarius Legacy Circle, a program that thanks people in their lifetime for naming the Vancouver Symphony Foundation or Society in their will or estate plans. Eight bequest gifts were received by the Society, and we thank these people for their foresight and generosity.

ENDOWMENT FUNDS & FOUNDATIONS

Gifts from charitable foundations and granting bodies are an integral component of our funding revenue each year. Whether through private, corporate, or public foundations, these funds allow us to consider new projects or initiatives that we may not otherwise be able to secure funding to pursue.

A robust endowment fund helps provide a stable source of income for the VSO to more effectively develop long-term plans. Thanks to the Canada Cultural investment Fund, donations to the VSO's Endowment Fund received are matched, in part, by the Federal Government.

A heartfelt **THANK YOU** to all our supporters for their vital role in the VSO's music-making, education and community engagement initiatives.

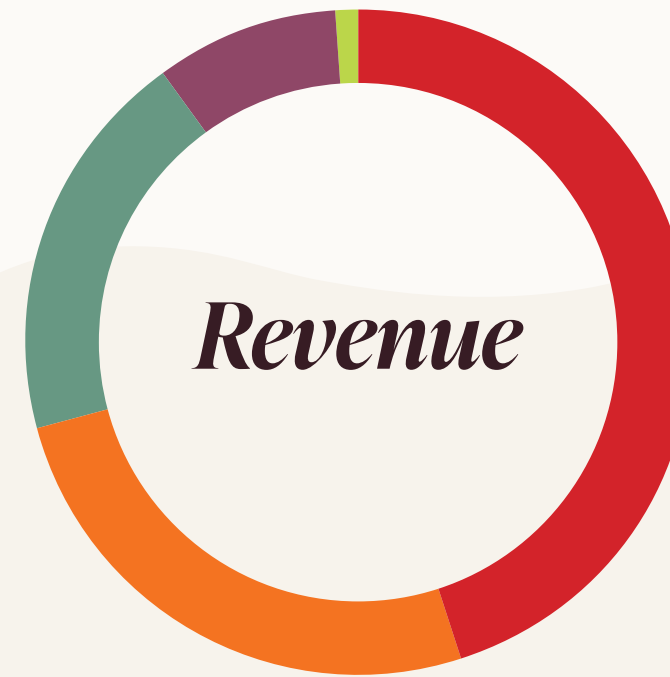


Financial Report

The 2023/24 season was the third year of our pandemic recovery. Due to diligent budget management and generous support from our donors, sponsors, and government, we were able to achieve a surplus for the year ending June 30, 2024. The surplus added to the VSO's accumulated surplus and will provide the VSO with stability in the next few years. Total revenue increased 11% over the previous year. This was largely due to an increase in ticket revenue of 23% over the prior year. Concert expenses increased 13% as we hosted a wide variety of national and international guest artists and presented many movies with live orchestra. We look forward to building on the success of the last season in 2024/25.



Alexandra Dariescu (piano) and Shiyeon Sung (conductor)
Debussy & Ravel, Feb 16, 2024



- EARNED REVENUE **45%**
- CONTRIBUTED REVENUE **26%**
- GOVERNMENT **19%**
- ENDOWMENT **9%**
- OTHER **1%**



- PERSONNEL **66%**
(INCLUDING MUSICIANS)
- CONCERT PRODUCTION **15%**
- MARKETING **11%**
- FUNDRAISING **3%**
- ADMINISTRATION **5%**

Education Highlights

VSO Education & Community Engagement provides programs tailored towards all ages and experience levels to increase access to music and music education and provide meaningful opportunities to engage with symphonic music.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONCERTS

- Attended by over 10,000 elementary students from over 50 schools across the Lower Mainland
- Study guides with strong curriculum links provided

Life Emerging: Antarctica!

Tailored for grades 3–7, this concert, featuring a multi-media work by VSO’s Associate Principal Trumpet and composer, Marcus Goddard, focused on conservation, collaboration, and connectedness. A standout moment was the collaborative composition, where students submitted musical motifs that Marcus Goddard transformed into an original piece performed by the orchestra. Including

a wide variety of music, this concert aimed to kindle a love for music as well as our environment.

What Do YOU Play?

This concert was hosted and created by our very own principal percussionist, Vern Griffiths, who has already toured across Canada with his hilarious show, *Wall to Wall Percussion*. Together with the musicians of the orchestra, and their trusty instruments, this production brought musical learning to life in a dynamic way. Tailored for Kindergarten to Grade 4 students, *What Do YOU Play?* consisted of short musical selections that offered a fun-filled exploration of the world of various musical instruments and what it means to play!

ORIGINO KIDS CONCERTS

An innovative array of programming delighted young audiences at our fun-filled 5-concert series on Sunday afternoons:

- *Al Simmons Something’s Fishy with the VSO*
- *Platypus Theatre: Charlotte and the Music-Maker*
- *Star Wars for Kids*
- *Classical Kids Live!: Saint-Georges’ Sword & Bow*
- *What Do YOU Play?*

SYMPHONIC ENCOUNTERS

Symphonic Encounters is the VSO’s open rehearsal program, taking students, teachers, and community groups behind the scenes of a working rehearsal. In 2023/24, over 2,000 students from 40 different schools across the Lower Mainland attended one of our six Symphonic Encounters events. A highlight of the program is an intimate meet and greet with VSO musicians that provides an opportunity for students to ask questions.

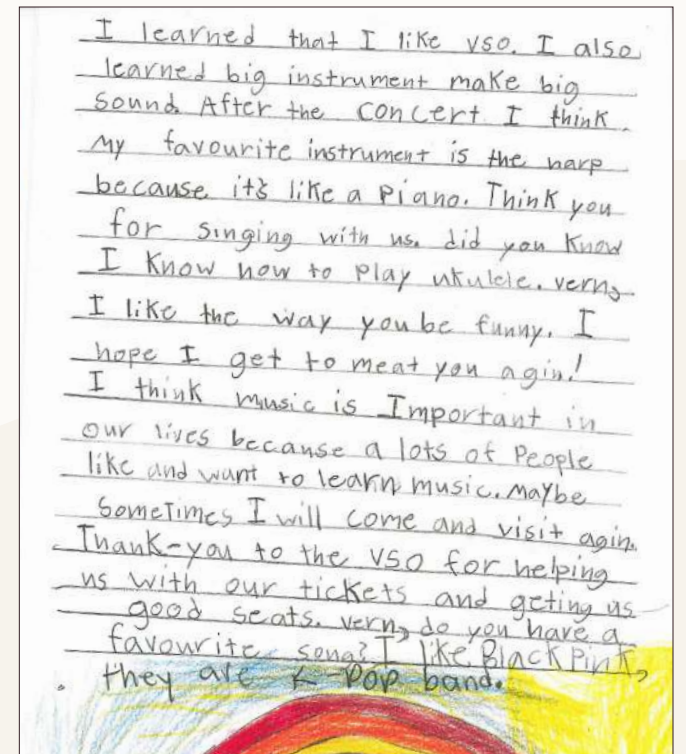
JEAN COULTHARD READINGS AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Led by Maestro Otto Tausk and Mentor Composer Edward Top, the Jean Coulthard Readings and Mentorship Program expanded over an eight-month residency, providing six emerging BC-based composers the opportunity to learn from guest composers, VSO musicians, and RBC Assistant Conductor David Bui. The program culminated in a reading and professional recording of the participants’ works by the orchestra. Additionally, composers attended exclusive open rehearsals and VSO performances. One participant remarked,

“I loved attending the VSO rehearsals, especially the performance with Steven Isserlis. Watching the orchestra’s rehearsal process was a real gem.”

VSO CONNECTS:

In 2023/24, the VSO Connects program was delivered at six elementary and five secondary schools, including Newton Elementary and Frank Hurt Secondary in Surrey, Seaforth Elementary and Byrne Creek Community School in Burnaby, Queen Elizabeth School Annex, Dr. H.N MacCorkindale Elementary and Eric Hamber Secondary in Vancouver, Birchland Elementary and Riverside Secondary in Coquitlam, and McCloskey Elementary



— William from William Cook Elementary School, Richmond.

and Delta Secondary in Delta.

With 64 visits and four Connects Open Rehearsals, the program reached 1,300 elementary students and 290 secondary students. One elementary participant shared,

“I liked flying like a bird and I liked the music. I also liked listening to the music and imagining things.”

VSO Connects Secondary provides music students with the unique opportunity to refine their instrumental skills through multiple sessions with VSO musicians. VSO Connects Elementary offers younger students an engaging introduction to the VSO and orchestral music, while also connecting them to various forms of art.

GIVING BACK

The VSO provided over 1,000 free and discounted tickets to schools and community groups to attend educational events, along with tickets to concerts and performances. The Giving Back program engages under-accessed community groups and schools in our educational and symphonic programming.



The Path Forward

On June 13, 2024, our community came together to honour Indigenous People's Day and experience the third annual *The Path Forward* at the Orpheum. Curated by the VSO's Indigenous Council, this celebration showcased the powerful voices of the Coast Salish Peoples from the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, alongside talented Indigenous artists from across Turtle Island.

With complimentary admission, the event welcomed everyone, making art and music accessible to all. Before the concert, attendees savoured bannock from Bannock Queen Bakery and engaged in hands-on activities at the VSO School of Music's playzone.

The mainstage concert, hosted by the charismatic Geena Jackson, featured extraordinary VSO collaborations, including the Musqueam Paddle Song performed by Nova Charles and the Coast Salish Anthem and Eagle Song performed by Dennis Thomas-Whonoak.

The VSO Indigenous Council's heartfelt welcome of the Tla'amin Nation was a highlight of the day, marking a significant addition to the festivities. This collaboration illuminated the contributions of Tla'amin singers, who joined forces with Prisma Music Festival students and VSO musicians, enriching the musical tapestry of the event.

The celebration culminated in a dazzling fashion show on the Orpheum stage, spotlighting the creativity and innovation of Indigenous designer Himikalas Pamela Baker with the Touch Of Culture Legends House of Design, complemented by music from DJ O Show.

The VSO and VSO School of Music extend their heartfelt gratitude for this profound collaboration, and we are proud to share *The Path Forward* with our community. We are also grateful to our presenting sponsor, TD Ready Commitment.



Vancouver's Supernatural Models, Dennis Thomas-Whonoak, TOCL by Designer Pam Baker



Tla'amin Nation Traditional Singers, Drew Blaney (top right)

Day of Music 2024

Vancouver Symphony's Day of Music 2024, presented by BMO, was the VSO and VSO School of Music's flagship event in our commitment to free and accessible musical programming for British Columbians. Day of Music took place on June 1, and featured 12 hours of free music performed by over 100 musical groups across 8 stages, plus a variety of online workshops. Concerts were held at the Orpheum, the VSO School of Music, Christ Church Cathedral, Deloitte, Telus Garden, BMO Branches, YVR, plus outdoor stages at Bill Curtis Square and Helmcken Plaza.

Day of Music brought the power of music to over 25,000 people – all for free.

The VSO was front and centre, featuring as Day of Music's spotlight evening performance at the Orpheum. Throughout the day, the VSO also shared

the Orpheum stage with student ensembles from the VSO School of Music. Pyatt Hall and classrooms at the School had packed houses all day for various VSO and School of Music soloists and ensembles, masterclasses, and Mini Music Maker workshops.

The vision of Day of Music is to bring communities and musicians from across British Columbia together to celebrate the joy, fun and healing nature of music making. Of the 100+ Day of Music performances, over 25 of them featured VSO musicians, VSO School of Music Faculty and/or students.

The VSO and VSO School of Music extend sincere thanks to the Day of Music 2024 Presenting Sponsor BMO, as well as the VSO's Community Engagement Partner TELUS, the Orpheum Stage Sponsor Cadillac, the Yaletown Stages Sponsor Yaletown BIA, YVR, and with support from the Jane McLennan Fund for Free and Accessible Music. The VSO also wishes to give special thanks to the Province of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, and its partners at Vancouver Civic Theatres.



Royal Academy of Punjab, Azalea Music Ensemble (bottom left), Michelle Jia Yun Xu (bottom right)

Programs

DEPTH OF PARTICIPATION

- 1,027 in private lessons
- 978 in group classes
- 398 in summer camps
- 307 in ensembles

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

The VSO School of Music's Youth Empowerment Program is a donor-funded education initiative providing at-risk youth with a safe space to explore different avenues of making music.

The program is based around weekly drop-in sessions that include instrumental music instruction, jamming, composition, and music production. The two-hour classes are tailored based on the interests of the participants, and are followed by a free meal. A regular faculty member supplements the programming with guest artists from a variety of musical disciplines. Participants also have the opportunity to take private lessons.

Over 30 youth took part in the program and several students went on to study guitar, harp, cello, clarinet, voice, and songwriting in their weekly private lessons.

Based on foundational research about the cognitive and emotional benefits of making music, and the added benefits of working musically as a group, the Youth Empowerment Program develops life skills while providing at-risk youth with access to the arts.

The VSO School of Music works with community partners to support attendance and access to the Youth Empowerment Program.

ENSEMBLES

The VSO School of Music's ensembles offer students inspiring opportunities to make music with

their peers, led by coaches and conductors at the highest artistic level. This experience builds new skills in musicianship, leadership, and teamwork, while leading to unique performance opportunities. In 2023/24, the ensembles continued to grow in size.

CLASSICAL

- 127 students in String Ensembles
 - Adult – Camerata
 - Advanced Youth – Sinfonietta
 - Intermediate Youth – Intermezzo & Concertante
 - Beginner Youth – Preludio
- 50 students in Chamber Groups

JAZZ

- 78 students in Jazz Combos
- 17 students in Big Band

TRADITIONAL CHINESE

- Azalea Chinese Music Ensemble

OTHER ENSEMBLES

- 2 Adult Guitar Ensembles
- 3 Youth Cello Ensembles
- Aureum Winds (Adult Ensemble)
- Recorder Ensemble
- Children's Choir
- Multi-Generational Choir



Intermezzo
Summer Strings, Jun 6th 2024

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

Our Mini Music Makers classes are taught by highly experienced and qualified Early Childhood music instructors and musicians, and are full of singing, moving, playing, and learning.

In 2023/24, we were able once again to expand our Mini Music Makers program beyond the downtown core to a satellite location in Surrey.

We offered several Meet the Instrument group beginner classes. These small classes give participants a solid foundation on the violin, piano, ukulele or flute while building musicianship skills.

Out of 697 VSO School of Music students age 0–6 years old

425 in Mini Music Makers

233 in summer, spring break, & pro-d day camps

43 in private lessons

43 in group beginner classes

PERFORMANCE PREP PROGRAM

The VSO SoM Performance Prep Program is a 10-month residency for gap year students who show a high level of musical talent and desire preparation to progress to higher education in classical, jazz or world music performance. This one-of-a-kind program provides invaluable experience for students and includes private lessons, ensemble classes, masterclasses by VSO guest artists, coaching by

VSO musicians, career-resilience development, marketing and public relations training, financial literacy training, audition and application preparation, and a wide range of performance opportunities.

2023/24 Performance Prep Program students

- Kira Gill, Violin
- Olivier Hart, Jazz Guitar
- Allison Lee, Jazz Bass
- Meesh QX, Voice
- Nina Vu, Piano

MUSIC FOR ALL AGES

The VSO School of Music welcomes students of all ages and skill levels to participate in lessons, group classes, ensembles, and performances.

2,241 students studied at the VSO School of Music in 2023/24

697 aged 0–6

486 aged 20–54

481 aged 7–12

146 aged 55+

431 aged 13–19

Our youngest student was 3 months old and our oldest student was 95.

VSO SCHOOL OF MUSIC

International Master Teacher Program

The International Master Teacher (IMT) program celebrates the unique connection between the VSO School of Music and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, as students benefit from this opportunity to meet and learn from some of the world's greatest performing artists. At each event, up to four of the VSO School of Music's advanced students receive individualized coaching from renowned artists, as part of the in-person masterclass. This program widely benefits the VSO and the VSO School of Music community and beyond, as the masterclasses can be attended live in Pyatt Hall or virtually via livestream.

In 2023/24, the VSO School of Music delivered a diverse offering of International Master Teacher events, across genres and formats.

12 International Master Teacher events took place in 2023/24

- Violin Masterclass with **Sarah Chang**
- Piano Masterclass with **Louis Lortie**
- Voice Masterclass with **Susan Platts**
- Jazz Masterclass with **Sarah Hanahan & Joe Farnsworth**
- Piano Masterclass with **Alexandra Dariescu**
- Piano Masterclass with **Eric Lu**
- Guitar Masterclass with **Aniello Desiderio**
- Big Band Masterclass with **Ostara Project**
- Violin Masterclass with **Augustin Hadelich**
- Chamber Masterclass with **Viano Quartet**
- Chamber Masterclass with **New Orford String Quartet**
- Violin Masterclass with **Vadim Gluzman**



Da-Wei Chan (left) and Sarah Chang (right)



Louis Lortie and Charles Wang, Eric Lu and Chelsea Yu (top left),
Alexandra Dariescu and Celina Chen (top right)

Faculty

At the very heart of the VSO School of Music, you will find a team of over 120 dedicated faculty members, including musicians of the VSO. The diverse faculty team spans instruments and musical styles and their high standards of pedagogical instruction, artistic excellence and passion for music education elevate the life experiences of our students.

Faculty members are the driving force behind many special opportunities for students. They take steps such as enrolling ensembles in competitions, planning festivals, collaborating with each other to create a concert of student compositions, and inviting each other to work with their students as a special guest. In many cases, teachers create bespoke arrangements or compositions to help motivate a student with repertoire that balances the challenges, strengths, individual needs and aspirations of each student. In these, and many other ways, our faculty support students in soaring to new and exciting heights!



William Rowson, Harold Birston, Carla Birston, Nadia Petriw

Bursaries & Scholarships

BURSARIES

The VSO School of Music provides classes, lessons, and opportunities to participate in ensembles to students in need, of any age or ability.

62 students received bursaries

In 2023/24, bursaries have been provided by:

- The HSBC Bursary Fund (for students aged 5–12)
- Saint James Music Academy
- The George & Mary Anne Sigal Fund (for students up to age 18)
- The Leon & Joan Tuey Bursary Fund (for youth)
- Youth Empowerment Program
- The Höing Family Foundation
- Andrea Stolte Foundation

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are awarded as part of the Future of Excellence Competition and the VSO School of Music Festivals for Strings and Piano. They are awarded based purely musical achievement.

53 scholarships were awarded

In 2023/24, scholarships have been provided by:

- The Höing Family Foundation:
 - Surrey High School Student Fund
 - Exceptional Talent Fund
- The Youtz Family Performance Prep Program Scholarship
- Peter and Mary Brunold Award for Excellence in Classical Music Making
- The Santa Cecilia Scholarship
- The Jean H. Eilers Violin Scholarship

FESTIVAL FOR PIANO

Primary: Emily Jang, student of Estelle Copéry; Sonya Rowson, student of Jammy Smith; Chezhiyan Balaji, student of LayTuan Tan

Junior: Clarissa Lo, student of Bernard Duerksen; Sam French-Green, student of Bernard Duerksen; Evelyn Park, student of Rosa Hong

Intermediate: Oliver Hoey, student of Alan Crane; Sebastian Wong, student of Alan Crane

Senior: Bohan Zhang, student of Sergei Saratovsky; Yuki Kirikae, student of Keiko Alexander; Charles Wang, student of Sergei Saratovsky

JEAN H. EILERS SCHOLARSHIP – VIOLIN

Generously endowed by her daughters, Irene McEwen & Eleanor Reemeyer

Xenia Huang, student of Carla Birston

FESTIVAL FOR STRINGS

Junior: Frannie Hwang, student of Carla Birston; Lina Kim, student of Ashley Plaut

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Senior: Carl Teng, student of Henry Shapard; Da-Wei Chan, student of Carla Birston; Kira Gill, student of Yi Zhou

Chamber: Ukiyo Quartet (Yeseo Choi, violin; Timothy Jin Seo Li, violin; Emma Sha, viola; Da-Yong Chan, cello), coached by Hung-Wei Huang

First place students are underlined

Outstanding Achievements

FESTIVAL & COMPETITION PERFORMANCES

Individuals and Ensembles from the VSO SoM consistently placed highly in local and international events. Some examples include:

- **Ukiyo String Quartet** (Yeseo Choi, violin; Timothy Jin Seo Li, violin; Emma Sha, viola; Da-Yong Chan, cello) coached by Hung-Wei Huang, placed 1st overall in the Senior Chamber Group category at the 2024 BC Performing Arts Provincials.
- **Astral Quartet** (Da-Wei Chan, violin; Xenia Huang, violin; Hilary Chan, viola; Carl Teng, cello), coached by Nicholas Wright, were the Senior First Prize and Audience Prize winners at the Friends of Chamber Music's 69th Young Musicians Competition.
- **Updog Trio** (Sunny San, violin; Gabrielle Haslett, cello; Tony Zhou, piano) coached by Carla Dodek and Henry Shapard, won the 17 and Under Chamber Class at the 2023 Canada West Performing Arts Festival.
- Composer **Jonathan Djakov**, student of Eileen Padgett, won 1st prize in the Elementary Category of the 16th Biennial Vancouver Chamber Choir's international Young Composer's Competition. His piece, "Laz" was premiered at their Horizons concert in January.
- Pianist **Wan Cheung (Jimmy) Lee**, student of Bogdan Dulu, was named one of CBC's "30 Under 30" hot Canadian Classical musicians, 2024, and had his orchestral debut in Italy in the 2024 MusicFest Perugia.
- Pianists **Zak Tucker** and **Arthur Yee**, students of Bernard Duerksen, both achieved First Class Honors with Distinction on their RCM level 7 exam.
- Pianist **Clarissa Lo**, student of Bernard Duerksen, placed first overall in Level 4 Classical and 20th & 21st Century Classes at the Vancouver Kiwanis Festival and placed first in the Richmond Music Festival Junior Contemporary and Classical Classes.
- Students in the Jazz program won top honours at the Surrey Jazz Fest. **Saige Adams**, a Big Band and Jazz Combo member, student of Jodi Proznick and Bill Coon, was awarded Outstanding Guitar Performance and was accepted to the VSO SoM 2024/25 Performance Prep Program. Jazz Combo member, **Tainn Ellersdorfer**, was awarded Outstanding Auxillary Percussion Performance and **Luka MacInnes**, Big Band and Jazz Combo member, was awarded Outstanding Saxophone Performance.

FUTURE OF EXCELLENCE COMPETITION

The VSO School of Music Future of Excellence Competition & Prize promotes, celebrates and supports the aspirations and achievements of young musicians studying at the VSO School of Music. The senior division winner gets a chance to appear as a soloist in concert with the VSO. The 2023/24 VSO SoM Annual Future of Excellence Competition had a high level of performance on display in both the junior and senior divisions.

• Senior Division

Winner: **Wan Cheung (Jimmy) Lee** (piano), student of Bogdan Dulu

Finalists: **Sophia Ner** (cello), student of Henry Shapard; **Charles Wang** (piano), student of Sergei Saratovsky

• Junior Division

Winner: **Stella Tan** (violin), student of Vinh Nguyen

Finalists: **Christopher Snodgrass** (cello), student of Cristian Markos; **Shawn Zhang** (piano), student of Keiko Alexander

Graduates & Alumni

- Jazz Bassist **Harmeet Kaur Virdee** was named one of 'Surrey's Top 25 Under 25.' This award spotlights the incredible initiatives of local youth who are recognized as role models for their community.
- Performance Prep Program participant, **Allison Lee**, student of Jodi Proznick and bassist for Big Band and a Jazz Combo, was awarded Long and McQuade Outstanding Musicianship Award at MusicFest Canada, Outstanding Bass Performance Award at Surrey Jazz Fest, and is the Fraser MacPherson Jazz Fund Recipient in the High School Division. Allison will attend Juilliard for Jazz Bass Performance.
- Trumpeter **William Xu**, Jazz Combo and Big Band member, was awarded a President's Scholarship, the Toronto Musicians Association Denny Christianson Scholarship at MusicFest Canada, and the Vancouver Fine Arts District Scholarship. William will attend the Manhattan School of Music.
- Trumpeter **Luke Young**, Jazz Combo and Big Band member, was a National Trumpet Competition Finalist, International Trumpet Guild Scholarship Recipient, and Berklee Brass Department Showcase Winner. Luke attends Berklee College of Music.
- Performance Prep Program participant **Olivier Hart** was awarded a Music Department scholarship, and will attend St. Francis Xavier University, studying Jazz Guitar.
- VSO School of Music Future of Excellence Competition winner **Yaming Zhu**, student of Yuri Zaidenberg, was the featured violin soloist with the VSO during the Day of Music Orpheum performance. He is currently finishing his Bachelor of Music at the Cleveland Institute of Music.
- Violinists **Caitlin Demello**, currently studying at UBC, and **Vivian Tsai**, students of Yuri Zaidenberg, participated in the International Music Festival "InterHarmony" in Italy, where they were selected for a masterclass with the former concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic, Guy Braunstein.
- Sisters **Diana Agasian** and **Marina Agasian**, students of Diane King, were featured vocal soloists at the VSO's Traditional Christmas concert series.
- Jazz Guitarist **Daniel Marmer**, student of Bill Coon and Jodi Proznick, received the Hnatyshyn Foundation's 2023 Developing Artist Grant of \$10K (Oscar Peterson Grant for Jazz performance).
- Viano Quartet founding member, **Lucy Wang**, student of Carla Birston, won the National Musical Instrument Bank Competition and was awarded the opportunity to borrow the ca. 1700 Bell Giovanni Tononi violin from the Canada Council for the Arts Instrument Bank.
- **Maxwell Holmes**, a member of Big Band, won Outstanding Piano Performance at Surrey Jazz Fest and will attend The New School in New York City, to study Jazz Piano Performance
- **Erin Kim**, student of Jodi Proznick, will attend McGill University to study Jazz Bass.
- Jazz Combo and Big Band member, **Sadie Koshan**, student of Jodi Proznick and Jesse Cahill, will attend McGill University to study Jazz Drums.

Financial Report

The School saw revenue growth of over 20% this year over the prior year. All areas of operations felt this growth in revenue, with lesson instruction during the September to June academic year seeing the strongest rate of revenue growth at 35%. The School continued its investment in its world-class faculty, with over 61% of operating expenses being allocated to instruction. Administrative staff and maintaining facilities are the smallest expenditures, at 27% and 7% respectively.

Record-breaking registration combined with building a culture of philanthropy at the School, alongside diligent financial management resulted in a modest surplus of 3% of annual expenditures. This positions the VSO School of Music for an ongoing strategic expansion in 2024/25 and beyond.



- TUITION, REGISTRATION FEES, AND MASTERCLASS TICKETS **76%**
- CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DONORS AND GOVERNMENT FOR CURRENT OPERATIONS **9%**
- OTHER **9%**
- RENTALS **5%**



- FACULTY AND TEACHING SUPPLIES **61%**
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- FACILITY OPERATIONS **7%**
- SPECIAL EVENT EXPENSES **3%**
- PROFESSIONAL, ACCOUNTING, AND LEGAL **1%**
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- OTHER **3%**



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