



VICTORIA
CONSERVATORY
OF MUSIC

The Young Artists Program



Nurturing Excellence in a Community of Emerging Musicians

2023 Program Evaluation SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Major Conclusions:

Did the Victoria Conservatory of Music Collegium Program for Young Musicians achieve its intended outcomes?

86% of all respondents found the program quite valuable or incredibly valuable. Only one person rated it 'not valuable'. Note that the survey response rate was 93% so these are very reliable results.

In the section measuring the impact on the student by various goal areas of the program, every section has a positive score – whether measured by teachers, students or parents.

Again in 2022/23 we asked everyone to rate “... *the Collegium has been successful during the Covid pandemic at keeping students engaged, connected and moving forward with their music.*” Covid was less disruptive in 2022/23 than the previous year, and still the **overall rating was 4.3 out of 5.**

Did the Collegium Program offer appropriate challenges to students, and did the program meet the needs of those who were involved (e.g., students, parents, and teachers)?

82% of all respondents thought the program was appropriately challenging.

89% of respondents would recommend the program to others; plus another 7% might recommend it = 96%

“This is the best music education program in Western Canada. I strongly recommend it to anyone who is interested in pursuing music education.” **Parent**

Collegium Artistic Director: **Simon MacDonald**
Collegium Animateur: **Micki Stirling**

Survey designed by Dr. Jamie Syer and Micki Stirling Updated and executed by Micki Stirling
via SurveyMonkey: a web-based electronic survey tool June-July 2023

2023 Collegium Program Evaluation

EVALUATION RATIONALE

We undertake this evaluation annually to assess our educational effectiveness and to give students, teachers and parents an opportunity to provide feedback on all aspects of the program. This is the seventeenth year of conducting this full-spectrum evaluation - part of an ongoing process to ensure that those involved with the Collegium have regular opportunities for creative input. We believe that it is crucial to regularly evaluate this unique program to assess its relevance and quality, and to incorporate new ideas and constructive responses from those who are most involved. Program evaluation results also help determine whether the Collegium is offering appropriate challenges to its participants and meeting the needs of the Greater Victoria community.

Program Description

The Collegium Program for Young Musicians was inaugurated in January 2006. The program was designed to provide an enriched and comprehensive curriculum for young pianists, instrumentalists, and singers between the ages of approximately 12 and 18 years who have reached at least a Grade 9 performance level, and who are notable for their musical achievement and promise. Starting in September 2011, we added a Junior category for students at a performance level of Grade 6 - 9 who show promise and dedication, but who are not yet at an age or proficiency that qualifies them for Full membership; and a Postsecondary category for VCM/Camosun students wanting to participate in chamber music at an advanced level. 2020-/22 we did not offer the Vocal Collegium Program due to the high risk of spreading Covid-19 through aerosols in shared air. In 2022 Voice Collegium was restarted as a program of the Voice Department and is hence, not included in this evaluation.

Students who participate in the Collegium Program already have a growing awareness that music is a valuable component in their lives and show strong self-motivation to devote their energy and time to developing their musical potential and talent.

Auditions are required for both new and returning students. Students are required to perform two contrasting solo works for their audition and may be tested on technique and sight-reading appropriate to their grade level; they are also asked to describe why they would like to be a member of the Collegium and what their commitment level is. Students' performances and responses to interview questions are considered together in decisions made regarding participation in the program. Also considered is the mix of instrumentation for chamber ensembles.

Applicants May 2022:

Full members: 25 ; Junior Members: 14 ; Postsecondary: 2 = **41**

Strings: 24 (Violin: 19 ; Viola:1 ; Cello: 4); Piano: 11, Winds (1 clarinet, 5 flute):6 ; = **41**

2022-23 Enrolment:

Full members: 22 ; Junior Members: 14; Postsecondary: 1 = **37**

Strings: 21 (Violin:16 ; Viola:1 ; Cello:4); Piano: 10 , Winds (1 clarinet, 5 flute): 6 ; = **37**

Program Objectives

One of the main objectives of the Collegium is to allow students to explore their artistic talents and develop their musical skills in a challenging yet nurturing musical community. The Collegium provides a comprehensive curriculum consisting of the following components: private studio lessons, chamber music ensembles, master classes, *Soundings* seminars, instruction in theory, history, or composition, work with accompanists; and special performance opportunities with other students, Conservatory faculty, and guest artists.

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Program Objectives (continued)

The Collegium Program also seeks to fulfill objectives beyond developing a student's musical potential. These objectives include:

- Offering a supportive community where the love and aptitude for classical music is shared by students' peers;
- Providing students with experiences and life-skills that are transferable to effectiveness as individuals working together towards a common purpose;
- Creating a growing sense of community among students, their families, and their teachers;
- Building bridges between the Conservatory and the wider musical constituency.

Tuition fees and Program Costs

In its efforts to make the Victoria Conservatory of Music more viable for all students of all ages and abilities, VCM has made changes in two areas over the past few years: 1. The subsidies for the Collegium Program have been eliminated and 2. Fundraising has increased the amount of scholarships and bursaries available, meaning that students all students pay less than the true cost and families with financial need pay significantly less: only 30% of the true cost of the program

2022-23 Tuition fees were:

Full membership: \$5430 – \$1900 scholarship = \$3530/year; Less Charman Bursary \$1620 = \$1910

Junior Members: \$2737 – (\$69 discount +\$1000 Scholarship) = \$1668/year; Less Charman Bursary \$815 = \$853

Postsecondary Members: \$1151 less tuition paid to Camosun \$781 less scholarship \$100 = \$270

EVALUATION PROCESS

With the assistance of Graduate Student Externs Rachel Yeung & Ed Chow from the University of Victoria we designed and implemented the first Collegium evaluation in the spring and summer of 2007.

Questionnaires were designed for each group (students, parents, faculty) with similar questions appropriately targeted. The questions have been updated in each of the subsequent seventeen years. These questionnaires were translated to on-line surveys via SurveyMonkey. Collegium staff are able to see who has responded, but we do not tie responses to individuals, hence assuring as much confidentiality as possible within a small sample group. Follow-up of non-respondents is done by email and phone. The surveys were sent out June 7th, closed July 6, 2023, and the results tallied as included in this report.

RESULTS: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Surveys were sent to 'internal' members of the Collegium community: **36 faculty members, 36 students and 35 parents**. They were not sent to guest artists and visiting faculty. Student feedback was also gathered in person at end of year evaluation sessions. Notes of these sessions are available on request. The number of parents is less than the number of students as there are a number of sibling groups in the Collegium, and most postsecondary students do not include their parents in the Collegium community. Of the three groups, 34 faculty members, 33 students and 33 parents responded. That is a response rate of 94% for faculty; 92% for students and 94% for parents with a **combined response rate of 93%**. Last year the response rate was 83% for faculty; 91% for students and 100%(!) for parents with a **combined response rate of 91.5%**. In 2021 it was 82.5%.

Collegium staff thank all 100 respondents for their support of and participation in this evaluation.

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From the Artistic Director:

The Victoria Conservatory's Young Artists Collegium has finished another successful year of motivating and inspiring Conservatory students to play together and as soloists at the highest level. (See list of successes below).

The Collegium did a very notable road trip to Salt Spring Island, performing at ArtSpring Community Arts Centre. We will make the same journey in the 2023/24 season. Respondents marked the tour very favorably in the evaluation.

Based on other feedback from the evaluation, we will hold meetings with parents, students, and other stakeholders to see if we can increase our outreach potential (performances around the city other than the Garden Tour, term-end concerts, and Festival such as at Care Homes and other public spaces), looking for help from volunteers and other resources to make this happen.

Also based on the evaluation results, we will continue to work to inspire the students not just in making great music, but towards positive growth for each student as an individual, supporting and cultivating respectful interaction between all students within the program.

From my perspective as Artistic Director, leading the program through the first real "post pandemic" year, I couldn't help but notice that the students themselves were more easily distracted, and the interpersonal relationships between the students were challenging at times. I believe that this had to do with challenges of a group of students coming together with the same pressures of the pandemic (COVID 19 is still with us), but none of the restrictions we associated with the disease.

Nonetheless, the group was a joy to work with, and most challenges were met with respect and diplomacy. Also, the group continued, as a whole, to operate on a very high level, as is evidenced by the following list of **successes**:

Post Secondary institution acceptances:

University of Ottawa, McGill (Schulich School of Music), and the Royal College of Music in London.

Summer Festival Placements:

Our Collegium students are joining alumni this summer at Quartet Fest West (Victoria), Orford and Domaine Forget Academies (Quebec), and University of Ottawa Summer Music programs

BC Provincial festival results:

Layla Park – Senior Strings, winner; **Camilo Aybar** – Intermediate Woodwinds, winner

Chloe Williams, Intermediate and Senior Woodwinds, honourable mention

Tubman Trio, Junior Chamber Group, winner; **Jelly Belly Trio**, Intermediate Chamber Group, winner

Collegium Alumni at the BC Provincial Festival:

Carey Wang – Sr Piano, Hon. Mention; **Michaela & Samantha Yee**, Int. Instrumental Duets, winner

National Festival:

Jelly Belly Trio, Intermediate Chamber Group, winner!

Veronica Park and Layla Park advanced to Nationals for the Developing Artist category and Emerging Artist category respectively. **Layla** was also the winner of the Victoria Festival's highest prize, the Roberto and Mary Wood Scholarship.

Other Collegium students representing the VCM in the community:

Eleven year old **Max Francis** (violin) is also a fiddler and won 1st in the Junior, Junior division of the US National Old-Time Fiddler's Contest (Idaho, June 2023), and 1st in the Junior division of the Bob Wills Fiddle Contest (Texas, November 2022), and 1st in the Championship category of the BC Old Time Fiddle Contest in Kamloops, (Sept 2022). Max recently was invited to front the Victoria Symphony at Butchart Gardens, wowing the crowd with a fiddle medley as encore after his classical repertoire.

Elana Lin (violin) won the Louis Sherman Concerto Competition

Camilo Aybar (clarinet) was the Intermediate winner of the Cowichan Consort Concerto Competition.

Camilo performed with the Emily Carr String Quartet at MUSIC: InsideOUT Mozart on April 22, 2023.

He and the symphony he composed will also be the subject of a documentary titled '*The Sound of a Pandemic*' from Empress Avenue Media.

Walter Rees (violin) earned a Royal Conservatory of Music Gold Medal in Strings.

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Alumni appointments to professional orchestras:

Jacob van der Sloot: Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, **Sophie van der Sloot :** Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, **Ethan Allers:** Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra ; **Blythe Allers** just moved from Phoenix Symphony to the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, **Tovin Allers,** National Art Centre Orchestra.

Alumnus **Simon Farintosh** (Collegium 2011-13) was named as one of **CBC’s 2023 ‘Top 30 under 30’** Musicians. Last year, we had two Collegium Alumni on that list.

And in spite of the length of this list, the spirit and purpose of the Collegium Program remain as **‘Excellence in music, teamwork and support of peers’**. We now have many alumni successfully pursuing non-music careers, using skills and maintaining friendships gained in the Collegium Program.

Simon MacDonald, Collegium Artistic Director & Head, VCM Strings Department

Last on this summary is a chart listing responses regarding desired outcomes/ goal areas of the program. The last right-hand column shows the overall ratings of each of ten statements concerning the Collegium. Colour coding: **Students** **Teachers** **Parents**

Ratings out of 5	JUNIOR		SR INSTR		ALL
	Response Count	Rating Average	Response Count	Rating Average	Rating Average
The Collegium program has helped me /my student/ my child improve my/his/her music skills.	13	4.31	20	4.35	4.33
	16	4.43	18	4.33	4.38
	14	4.60	19	4.42	4.50
I/ My student(s) /my child(ren) has/have a better appreciation for music as a result of my/his/her/their involvement in the Collegium.	13	4.08	20	3.95	4.00
	16	4.43	18	4.11	4.26
	14	4.40	19	4.28	4.33
The Collegium has helped me/ my student(s)/ my child to improve my/his/her/their communication skills with others.	13	3.69	20	3.70	3.70
	16	4.21	18	4.11	4.16
	14	4.00	19	3.94	3.97
The Collegium Program has helped me/ my student(s)/ my child(ren) to understand how to work as a team member.	13	4.31	20	3.80	4.00
	16	4.29	18	4.06	4.17
	14	4.60	19	4.06	4.29
In the Collegium Program, I/ my student(s)/ my child(ren) was exposed to powerful musical experiences.	13	3.77	20	3.85	3.82
	16	4.00	18	4.06	4.03
	14	4.50	19	4.06	4.25
Participation in Soundings sessions broadened my/ his/her/their knowledge of the world of music.			20	3.9	3.90
			18	4.29	4.29
			19	4.35	4.35
The Collegium Program has increased my/ his/her/their sense of value as a musician.	13	4.23	20	3.85	4.00
	16	4.36	18	3.94	4.14
	14	4.30	19	4.37	4.34
The Collegium Program has made me/ my student(s)/ my child(ren) more visible to the community as a musician.	13	4.00	20	3.70	3.82
	16	4.29	18	3.94	4.10
	14	4.50	19	4.47	4.48
In my opinion, the Collegium Program is successful in building bridges between VCM and the wider music community.	13	4.08	20	3.70	3.85
	16	4.27	18	3.75	3.99
	14	4.20	19	4.47	4.36
In my opinion, the Collegium was successful during the Covid pandemic at keeping students engaged, connected and moving forward with their music.	13	4.10	20	3.95	4.01
	16	4.15	18	4.20	4.18
	14	4.80	19	4.67	4.73
33 Students					
34 Teachers	Total	100			
33 Parents					

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“Collegium was quite a challenge but I think that really helped me to improve.” Student

Why I recommend the Collegium: *“The program can offer the best musical education in Victoria, and my child enjoys it.”* Parent

“Senior Collegium instils the highest standards of expectations for a professional musician, gives many opportunities for performance and inspires students to reach higher and expand their abilities.” Teacher

“What I liked most about the Senior Collegium Program was the opportunity to become more involved in the Victoria music community, collaborate with other musicians my age in an environment with high musical standards and attend masterclasses led by fantastic professional musicians.” Student

“Learning to perform together at a high level with others is the best way for a musical child to explore and be their best.” Parent

Why I recommend the Collegium: *“It’s a great opportunity to make music with one’s peers, be part of a music community, learn from different teachers and gain performance experience and confidence.”* Teacher

Why I recommend the Collegium: *“It is a great learning opportunity and you get to make new friends and improve your musical abilities and take things to the next level.”* Student

What I liked most: *“Fostering inclusivity, respect and camaraderie.”* Teacher

“I think it’s really cool and one of a kind.” “It’s fun.” Student

Why I recommend the Collegium: *“It’s a great program for its ability to create a community of young musicians – Collegium is where my kid’s best friends are. My kid loved the chamber music aspect and felt Collegium really improved their performance ability.”* Parent

FULL SURVEY RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST: stirling@vcm.bc.ca
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