



---

S A I N T

---

J A M E S

---

M U S I C

---

A C A D E M Y

---

# Saint James Music Academy 2014-15 Report



## Growing the Change in our Community

The next generation may look back at this age of personal devices and Xbox with a mixture of admiration and antipathy. The convenience of an iPhone is undeniable, and while a video game may finally prove too consumptive, it will not be judged as malevolent. Yet it also seems true that certain of our human connections are clearly being challenged by them, and with every next Twitter message that old time sense of belonging to a tangible community threatens to disappear. Here in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) of Vancouver – Canada’s poorest urban neighbourhood – we know that when this growing phenomenon of ‘disconnection’ meets the malign effects of poverty, the challenges become acute, and doubly so for the children, who are more vulnerable to the forces of society holding sway over us all.

Saint James Music Academy exists to reconnect our children and youth. First, to themselves, for every child is a treasure of great potential waiting to grow into its own. Second, to others, for humans are more fully human when they belong. And third, to the human virtues which remain unchanged in every age: self-understanding, compassion, generosity, and an eye for the greater good of others.

The medium for this ambitious work of social transformation is music, for music is the language of joy and of hope, spoken by everyone, and understood by all. But in order to reconnect our youth we do not only teach them music: we *use* music. SJMA choirs and orchestra are effectively microcosms of society where, in these safe social networks, children may develop the life skills they need to reconnect. Here they learn about themselves, and about healthy participation with others. Here especially they learn about the magic of what can happen when people work together. We call this process “collaborative music making.” But it means much more. It means creativity and artistry. It means nurturing the visceral human desire for relationships. It means praise of the other, and joining hands to elevate all.

At SJMA the staff, teachers, and volunteers combine their knowledge and energy to nudge children along in collaborative music and everything it offers. Our desire is to be coaches and friends to them. For we also thrive with connection, and know that only by working together can we ever achieve what the skeptics and disparagers do not think possible. Artistry and community. The adverse effects of poverty reversed. The children replicating their optimism and love of neighbour in their circle of peers and families. This is our ambition. This is our dream.

## The 2014-15 SJMA Programs

### 1. The Core Afterschool Program

SJMA's Afterschool Program runs Monday – Friday and is divided into the Junior and Senior Programs. Both programs include:

#### ✓ Safe Transportation

Children are brought directly from public school to the Academy, using adult volunteers who chaperone children on foot from nearby schools or by van for those farther away.

#### ✓ Daily Nutrition

A nutritious meal is provided daily for all children. We currently serve over 450 meals each week. The Nutrition Program is staffed by one part time supervisor and numerous volunteers that prepare, cook, serve and clean. Nutrition time is also a community time, when we often arrange for children to enjoy short recitals by visiting professional musicians, our teachers, or fellow students.

#### ✓ Music Theory and Rhythm

Kodaly and other methods are used to teach children to read and understand concepts in music.

#### ✓ Focus Instrument Lesson

Children are assigned their focus instrument on the basis of desire, potential and need. This year we have been able to offer instruction in all orchestra categories. Typically, these lessons are conducted in small groups. Some children also receive additional one-on-one lessons.

#### ✓ Collaborative Music Making: Choir and Orchestra

The heart of our program is children working together. Choir and Orchestra act as miniatures of community life, where not only music is learned but also social skills, teamwork, mutual support and respect. All children are enrolled in choir or orchestra, or both.

#### ✓ Elective

Every child is unique and comes to us with a unique set of needs. We try to answer those needs by personalizing each child's learning experience through the elective component which, for instance, may mean an extra lesson in their focus instrument, or in voice, or in music therapy.



### 2. The Music Therapy Program

Some of our children are significantly challenged with learning disabilities, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, or physical and/or emotional trauma. The Music Therapy Program is designed to meet the needs of such children, ensuring that our policy of 'every privilege accorded to every child' is met. A certified music therapist is employed to oversee this program.

### **3. The Public School Outreach Program**

In part, SJMA was founded after public funding for music education in local public schools disappeared. Since 2010 SJMA has offered free music classes once-weekly at four local public schools. Enrollments in our Outreach Program exceeded 250 this year.

### **4. Youth Mentorship**

Children are much more influenced by their peers than by adults. The Mentorship Program is designed to promote positive peer relationships and role modeling. Advanced students qualify to become mentors to the younger ones, acting as personal guides and assisting in classroom support, including at times actual music instruction. In turn, they are modestly compensated, teaching them the value of work and reward.

### **5. Public Performances**

It is crucial that children experience the recognition and affirmation of the adult world for their efforts. Our public concerts are intended to showcase the achievements of the children, to give them a sense of triumph, and a vision of what, with effort, they can do. Performances also teach children at an early age to be confident on a public stage, to enjoy sharing their music, and to 'give back' to their community. SJMA concerts are a point of pride and happiness for families and friends of the DTES who celebrate the goodness of what is taking place. Hence we welcome opportunities where children may perform, whether at large public events or within care facilities, shelters or seniors homes. Sometimes we simply set them up on a sunny day in the public park.



### **6. Summer Music Camps**

SJMA Summer Music camp began as a means of keeping in touch with our kids, and they with music, through the months of school recess. Camp typically runs for two weeks in August and offers place for sixty children. SJMA also sponsors children to attend other summer music camps, such as Thrive City String Boot Camp and Camp WCAMs.



## The Year in Review

### Successes

#### 1. Record enrollments once again

SJMA again reached an all-time high this year. A total of 190 students were enrolled in the afterschool program this year, with 172 completing (117 senior students, and 55 junior students).

#### 2. Budgeted needs for the year met, and under budget

We received \$868,000 in support this fiscal year from almost 400 various donors (including foundations, agencies, faith communities, individual gifts, *Symphony of 1000* monthly donors, fundraising events, etc.). Our budget was set at \$743,000. By making certain aspects of the program more efficient this year, we were able to complete the year under budget, with expenses totaling \$738,000.

#### 3. Facilities agreements

Agreements for both the Saint James Anglican Church site and the nearby Annex site (owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Vancouver) have now been secured for the forthcoming year, with agreements that a long term lease be considered.

#### 4. Community Partner opportunities

This year SJMA worked together with the following organizations and community groups to enrich our children:

- ✓ **The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra:** provided hundreds of passes to Sunday afternoon performances, plus 2 ½ hours weekly of private instruction at the VSO School of Music.
- ✓ **The Vancouver Recital Society:** sponsored a performance at SJMA of Bash the Trash
- ✓ **Instruments Beyond Borders:** funding SJMA instrument needs
- ✓ **City in Focus:** provided tickets for kids to attend Bard on the Beach, offered valuable support and networking with donors
- ✓ **Vancouver Public Schools:** regular liaison with and support from Strathcona, Seymour, Britannia, and Macdonald elementary schools, Britannia and Templeton Secondary,
- ✓ **Long and McQuade:** instrument care and repairs
- ✓ **Prussin Music:** offered instruments at reduced prices if purchased for SJMA

- ✓ **Sunrise Produce:** monthly food donation to SJMA Nutrition program
- ✓ **The Vancouver Academy of Music:** annual endowment gift to SJMA
- ✓ **University of British Columbia, Faculty of Education:** a three-year collaboration with SJMA on a Self-Regulated Learning project
- ✓ **University of British Columbia, School of Music:** sponsored children to attend summer music camps
- ✓ **Vancouver Writers Exchange:** musically themed creative writing workshops for the kids
- ✓ **World Vision Canada:** provided a two-year strategic planning and leadership development program
- ✓ **The Vancouver Moving Theatre with Simon Fraser University:** ten shows of the annual Bah Humbug production with participation of SJMA choir
- ✓ **The Composers Workshop:** provided a six-week composer workshop
- ✓ **Heart of the City:** annual arts festival with participation of SJMA kids
- ✓ **Outward Bound Canada:** 22 SJMA children were able to attend a two-day camping and rock climbing program to encourage team building and leadership
- ✓ **Telus Community Ambassadors:** ongoing support with volunteers and financial support of SJMA summer camps
- ✓ **Pacific National Exhibition:** gave twenty passes for SJMA kids to attend PNE Playland
- ✓ **Face of Today and Nimbus:** produced audio recordings of SJMA concerts
- ✓ **Watson Advisors, Inc.:** provided pro bono consultation on Board governance and policy making
- ✓ **Fluevog Shoes and Boots:** offered regular support and hosted an annual fundraising event
- ✓ **The Penticton Music Academy:** SJMA supported their work to create an El Sistema based music program

## 5. Nutrition Program expansion

Originally begun as an adjunct to the music program, our Nutrition Program has grown to become a significant part of our work. SJMA staff and many volunteers prepared and served over 14,000 meals this year.

## 6. Child safety and management improvements

Child safety and security remain a high priority at SJMA. Refinements to our check in and check out system, and door entrance monitoring at both afterschool locations has improved with increased staff.

## 7. Performances and public events

The SJMA orchestra and choir performed this year at several new events, and returned to many others. Some of these include:

- ✓ The Heart-Mind Summit with the Dalai Lama
- ✓ The SJMA Christmas Concert
- ✓ The SFU Bah Humbug performance with the Vancouver Moving Theatre
- ✓ The Sing it Forward Concert at the Vogue Theatre with 1200 guests attending
- ✓ Heart of the City arts festival
- ✓ Fluff Design staff Christmas party and silent auction
- ✓ five Sing It Forward music video productions

- ✓ The Instruments Beyond Borders Benefit Concert
- ✓ The Orpheum Theatre with Turning Point Ensemble
- ✓ The Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
- ✓ The SJMA Spring Finale
- ✓ The Community Arts Council of Vancouver and Switch, an annual fundraiser for DTES arts initiatives
- ✓ The European Film Festival
- ✓ Victory House, performing for residents at this supportive mental health housing complex
- ✓ Harbour Light, providing entertainment at this local addiction recovery centre
- ✓ Vancouver City Hall for The Japanese Friendship Association and tsunami victims



## **8. Year I of the Self-Regulated Learning Project**

This year completes the first of a three-year project conducted jointly with the UBC Department of Education. The project aim is to help our teachers become more skillful at working with the children and youth in our unique environment, and on developing the social/emotional wellbeing of students, specifically to promote their a) inner motivation, b) a deeper sense of belonging, and c) accomplishment.

## **9. Volunteers**

SJMA depends on many volunteers. We are deeply grateful for all of them, numbering more than sixty this year, and especially to our outgoing volunteer coordinator Peter Van Ooyen, and to our new coordinator David Liou. Volunteer tasks include:

- ✓ teachers: several highly qualified volunteer music instructors join our 38 paid music staff
- ✓ the Walking School Bus: Adult volunteers chaperone almost 100 children from Strathcona Elementary school to the Academy
- ✓ volunteers for security, daily meal preparation and clean up, and attendance monitors
- ✓ phone Tree volunteers: to inform families of important information or upcoming events
- ✓ concert volunteers: at our twice-yearly concerts
- ✓ food volunteers: at our Community dinners and public receptions throughout the year
- ✓ translators for all communications
- ✓ chaperones and supervisors for various field trips, including to the opera or symphony, and off-site student performances
- ✓ volunteer Board of Directors

## **10. Expanded donor base**

Our fantastic community of supporters continues to grow. New major donors this fiscal year include:

- ✓ Estate of Dorothy Ryan
- ✓ Anonymous family foundation
- ✓ The Vancouver Foundation
- ✓ The Edwina and Paul Heller Memorial Fund
- ✓ Wesgroup Properties LP
- ✓ Music Heals Charitable Foundation
- ✓ Houssian Family Foundation
- ✓ Peter and Stephanie Chung Family
- ✓ Moh Faris Family
- ✓ Zag Heartbeats
- ✓ Sodican, Inc.
- ✓ Newcap Radio – Shore 104

We have also enjoyed an increase in both new one-time donors, as well as almost 100 monthly subscribers to our “Symphony of 1000” donor campaign, the latter now providing double the financial support it did at this time last year.

## 11. Sustainability issues addressed

Aware of our rapid growth as an organization the SJMA staff and Board have taken a proactive approach to ensuring that we remain healthy and viable for years to come. Three specific areas were focused on this year:

- ✓ Strategic planning, leadership and strengthening of staff

The entire core SJMA staff personnel is now enrolled in the two-year Freeform Leadership training course, a program of reflection and analysis, training, long range planning, and weekly staff engagement on organizational development.

- ✓ Board of Directors governance

Continuing its work with Watson Advisors, Inc., the SJMA Board is clarifying governance issues and developing various Board policies.

- ✓ Progress on beginning a SJMA Endowment Fund

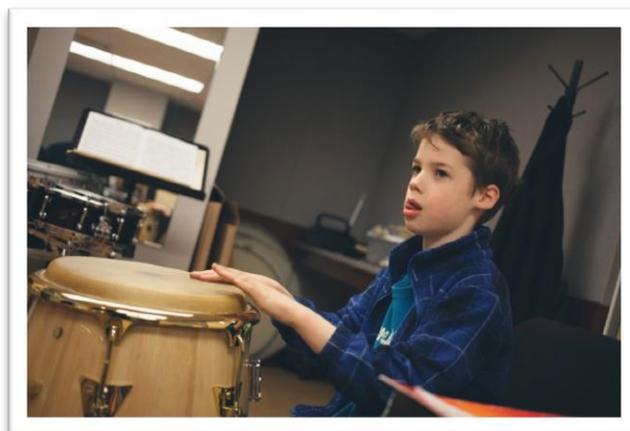
We are currently in the process of forming a first-ever SJMA Endowment Fund. A seed gift of \$5,000, and another \$1,800 in additional gifts, are being held until the fund is officially opened. Our fundraising committee and key members of the Board will develop this new means of ensuring resources for SJMA.

## 12. Program efficiency

The per hour cost per child at SJMA is only \$12, which includes daily nutrition, safe afterschool care (for three hours daily), group and private instrument instruction, music theory, orchestra and choir, as well as numerous special activities such as attendance at the VSO or the Vancouver Opera. By comparison, the typical cost for a thirty-minute private music lesson elsewhere is \$35 or more.

## 13. Student progress

We see real growth in many of the students, both musically and in those areas of crucial need that our program is designed to meet: greater self-confidence, learning to work together as a team, improved focus, positive peer relationships, higher public school engagement, social maturation, and improved behavior.





## **Meeting the Challenges**

### **1. Maintaining our commitment to excellence**

We recognize that the need in our neighbourhood for placing children in our program remains high, but that we must not sacrifice quality for quantity. Our model works best when we can offer significant personal attention to each child. We continue to work to hold the balance between demand and our dedication to a superior program.

### **2. Student retention**

Given the volatile social conditions of many of our families, it is always challenging at SJMA to retain our students. That challenge is usually heightened with adolescence, when peer pressure becomes particularly acute. We typically retain about 90% of our students, and this year, in terms of percentage, was no exception (89%). However, several of those who left the program this year were advanced students, which of course impacts the whole remaining orchestra and choir. To address this challenge, we have made a thorough revision of our student enrollment policy and parent/caregiver commitment, which we will begin using this Fall.

### **3. Long term facility agreements**

With short-term tenancy agreements secured, we are now in discussion to obtain a long term lease for a permanent Academy home.

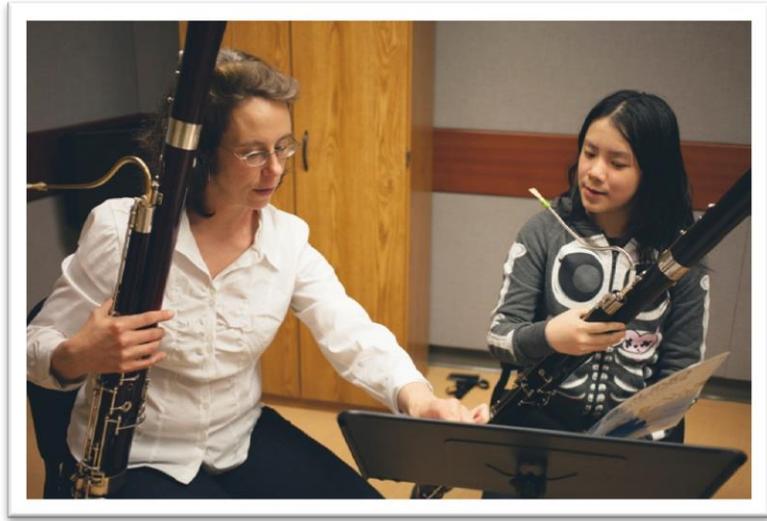
### **4. Managing the logistics of a growing Academy**

Increased volume in every area – students, nutrition, instrument inventory, donors, budget, staff, – has meant that our various operations systems have been taxed. Software and hardware upgrades, and new systems management needs are currently being addressed.

### **5. Long range funding security**

As we enter 2015-16 year we are stronger financially than we have ever been, both toward meeting our next budget target, and of addressing long term sustainability. However, the task of fundraising

is never done. Reflecting our continued growth, our budget for the forthcoming year will be increased by 11%, most of which is earmarked for a new part time staff position.



## **The Year Ahead**

### **1. Quality music teaching**

We have established high expectations for both teachers and students at SJMA. Because we employ some of Vancouver's finest teaching artists, our teaching costs are a large part of our budget. Despite the fiscal challenges, we remain committed to ensuring that our students have access to the level of music education needed to help them reach their full potential.

### **2. Modest expansion of enrollments**

Our forecast for enrollments in the 2015-16 year call for a 10% increase over the highest enrollment in 2014-15 (192), to 211. Of these we anticipate 144 senior program students, and 67 junior students.

### **3. New program: Exploring Music for Early Learners**

Entering year students will now be enrolled in a new program that introduces basic music concepts before beginning to play an instrument.

### **4. New structure to Core afterschool program**

In response to our desire to optimize student retention, to add a stronger emphasis on community-building, and to be more efficient with our resources, the core curriculum (instrument, choir, orchestra, theory) this Fall will be consolidated to two days weekly (Mon., Wed.), with an optional third day weekly (Thurs.), and finally, a day for community building (Fri.) through special events such as field trips to concerts, sporting and cultural events that focus on the fun of being together.

### **5. Increase staff capacity**

As we grow, our need for additional staff also grows. The roles of our Nutrition Supervisor and Operations Assistant will be expanded. Also, the Board of Directors has approved the hiring of a second, part-time fundraising and public-relations advocate.

## SJMA Staff

The core staff at SJMA are each skilled in their respective roles. It is also a part of our ethos that every staff person be adaptable to needs, meaning each be willing to pitch in to do whatever needs doing! As such, our staff is a great team, willingly serving in capacities beyond their actual job description. This esprit de corps also helps us to run the organization on a modest staff budget.



Kathryn Walker	Executive Director	full time
Stephen Rathjen	Director of Programming	full time
Paul Myers	Director of Development	part time
Elisha May Walker	Operations Manager	part time
Karen Hefford	Outreach Coordinator	part time
Additional staff:		
Olivia Lohan	Nutrition Program Supervisor	part time
David Liou	Operations Assistant	part time

Nine other part time, hourly staff persons assist with operations, door security, and bookkeeping.

Thirty-eight professional music and voice instructors are employed at professional hourly rates.

## The 2014-15 Board of Directors

Tom Durrie – Chair

Teacher, retired

Director, Grandview Woodland Area Council

former Executive Director of Arts Advocacy British Columbia

former General Manager of the Pacific Baroque Orchestra

Dee Dee Sung – Vice-Chair

Associate Director, Planned Giving, Simon Fraser University

Sandra Birch – Secretary

Director, Learning Resource Department, McNeely Elementary School

Alex Lau – Treasurer  
Manager, Grant Thornton LLP

Paddy Bickerton  
President, Reunion Pictures  
Chair of the SJMA Governance Committee

Harry Biden  
Manager, retired  
former General Manager of Marketing & Sales for Canadian Pacific Railway  
former President of St. James Community Service Society

Andrew Dawes  
Musician, retired  
former jury member for the London International String Quartet Competition, the Coleman Chamber Music competition, and the Fischhoff Chamber Music competition; former Chairman of the Banff String Quartet Competition; Recipient of the Order of Canada, the Governor General's Award, the Chalmers National Music Award, The Canada Council's Molson Prize, and winner of three Juno Music Awards.

Arlene Gladstone  
Social Worker, retired  
former Executive Director, Family Services of the North Shore  
former Chair of the Vancouver Opera Association and the Vancouver Opera Foundation  
Chair of the Fundraising Committee

Sharon Kravitz  
Documentary filmmaker  
former President of the Community Arts Council of Vancouver

Patricia McSherry  
Teacher, retired  
former administrator of various performing arts organizations  
Saint James Anglican Church representative to SJMA

Kathryn Walker, ex officio  
Academy founder  
Executive Director at SJMA



SAINT  
JAMES  
MUSIC  
ACADEMY

## Gratitude

Support for SJMA comes in many forms: financial, gifts-in-kind, consultation and professional advice, and many volunteer activities. All of these are vital to SJMA's work of 'reconnection'. We acknowledge with appreciation the vital place occupied by our supporters, whether community friends and partners, our large volunteer network, our volunteer Board, our dedicated staff, our more than three dozen music teachers, and our many hundreds of financial allies.