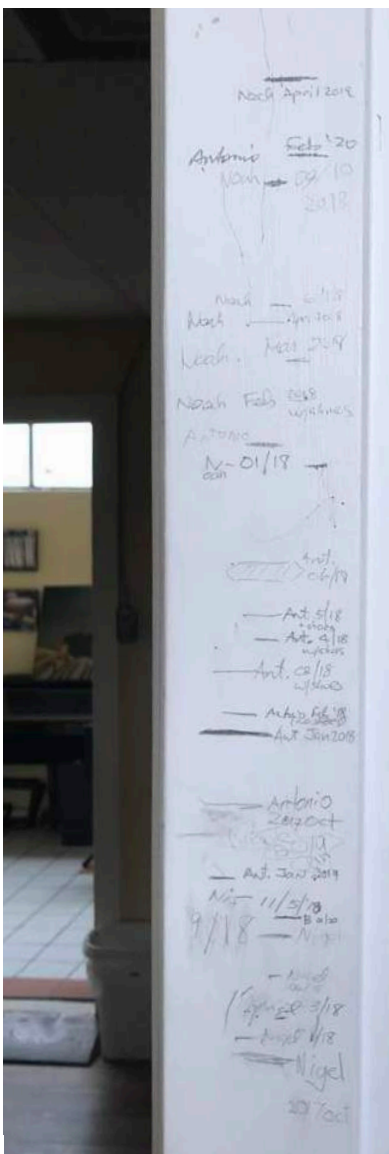


**SAiNT JAMES
MUSiC ACADEMY**

Annual Report 2019-2020





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Introduction

Children Are the Gift

If Covid-19 has taught us anything of late, it is that hope is as necessary to human survival as water and air. And when we find ourselves in short supply of hope, we may turn to those who are intrinsically vessels of it: the children among us. Not yet sullied by the cares or the cynicism of the adult world, they can, with a mere smile, inspire us to discover again a reason to push on. But children are human: they can also be scared without knowing why, anxious in uncertainty, and dependent on explanations to comfort them. In such times music can be one means of stability for them, a bridge from scary to hopeful again. Music education is an anchor in the tumult, a resource slow to learn but strong to stay, and an antidote to the abundant false assurances so readily available in our quick-fix, tip of our fingers era. Step-by-step, with concentration and effort, anxiety is dispelled, and in its place creativity is born. Self-confidence is born. Real world hope is born.

But music is so much more. It is also the language of feelings, and its many expressions - whether joyous or plaintive - fill our world with myriad forms of beauty. Consider the smile of a grandfather as he watches his granddaughter play *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* on a cello. Or the soul-touching effect of a sad song that can vault us out of the limitations of the prosaic to say what we cannot find the words to say. For both adult and child alike, music is powerful and deep. It provides us with a measure of hope every day, and especially on those days when we need it most.

At Saint James Music Academy we see what music can do. We see that every moment a young person spends learning to play a musical instrument is an investment in their better future; in a future version, if you will, of themselves. They discover that they are someone who is worth investing in. All their effort will be worth it because they were worth it!

The children will learn this in time. But the “not-so-secret-secret” at SJMA is that we know it is not all about an end result. There are so many gifts all along the way. The gift of doing difficult things together. The gift of learning from our mistakes. The gift of long-lasting friendships. The gift of hope bouncing around for each other during hard times. The gift of community. Life is never promised to be easy, but with the right support and the right opportunities, the journey for our children will be worth every moment.

Within these pages are reports on our activities in the 2019-20 year. In essence each one is a declaration of our hope, and of our resolve. Yes, we sometimes feel hard pressed. Caught unawares. Thrown off our game. Brought low by a substance 10,000 times smaller than a grain of sand. But we are surrounded here by a force even greater, a world-changing power. That power is the ray of hope that shines in the eyes of a child.





A Message from the President of the Board

Alex Lau



As I look back on our 2019/2020 year, I am proud to be part of an organization that continues to make a difference in our community. We started off our season with a fresh new website, a larger program of students, and a focused direction for making musicianship, community, and engagement even better than before.

One particular highlight for me in the first half of our year was our Christmas concert held at the Buddhist Temple, our neighbour. It was a night for me that encapsulates SJMA and the coming together of our community. There was a positive energy of musicianship, teamwork, and confidence demonstrated by our students on the stage, supported vigorously by our diverse families, generous donors, and volunteers in the crowd that evening.

In the last quarter of our year, we along with the rest of the world were impacted by the global pandemic. Holding true to our values, our team immediately focused on the needs of our community by organizing to meet urgent food and hygiene necessities. Our teachers worked with our team to create a virtual teaching platform to bring SJMA into the homes of our families. Our team worked tirelessly in the back end to restart and keep the program going to continue to make the positive difference SJMA always has.

As we focus on a very uncertain 2020/2021 two thoughts come immediately to mind. First, after seeing how we have weathered the storm in the past six months, I am optimistic and confident SJMA and our staff, teachers, and families will continue to thrive together as a community.

My second thought is that now is the right time to give thanks and recognition. I want to thank Sarah Godoy for steering the ship in some uncharted waters at SJMA as the Acting Executive Director last year. I look forward to supporting her next year as our Executive Director and as we continue to improve the program. I want to thank all our team members and teachers for always sticking to our values and delivering on our mission. I want to thank and recognize Kathryn Walker for creating this wonderful organization and I wish her the best in the next chapter of her life. To our donors and families, thank you for your commitment to the organization. Without your support none of this magic would have been possible.

Keep safe and keep well. Sincerely,



Executive Director

Sarah Godoy



The exceptional year of 2019-20 is behind us, a year that can be cleanly divided between “then” and “now” of pandemic. We began with our usual abundance of excitement - an enthusiastic team of staff, teachers, and volunteers, and the fresh faces of new and returning children. Our junior program was amplified with a pilot project that saw our novices in attendance three days per week. And our calendar was absolutely overflowing with special musical activities and events. The fall season closed joyfully with our annual Christmas Concert, this year held at the nearby Vancouver Buddhist Temple, packed to the rafters with 350+ friends, families, and supporters.

Then, in the midst of Spring Break 2020, the world stood still. For SJMA, the change could not have been more dramatic. As with everyone, at first we were simply taken off guard. We didn’t know when we’d see each other next, and eventually we began to wonder how a program that, at its core is about bringing people together, could continue to happen. It was a frightening time: A music program silenced. But even more frightening was the impact on our very community - Our neighbours, families, and friends. We recovered quickly from that early shock, and mobilizing staff, parents, volunteers and financial supporters, we addressed the urgent needs at hand. Our Annex building was reorganized to serve as a community-based emergency food and hygiene hamper distribution site, and with SJMA staff helping, the project was launched. The first focus was reaching those living in Single Room Occupancy hotels in the Downtown Eastside, as well as SJMA families in need. At the same time, we worked on the technological challenges so that within one month we were able to begin online lessons for our students. We eventually facilitated a schedule of 128 individual one-on-one lessons weekly, delivered by 22 teachers in 14 instruments or disciplines. In May we added additional online

classes for small ensembles, including choir, art and dance. About one-third of our staff were laid off, but those who remained did whatever needed doing: delivering instruments, sheet music and supplies to children at home, providing regular instrument tuning, distributing gift cards to our families, etc.

And when the date of the close of our 2019-2020 regular program rolled around, rather than say an anxious goodbye in an uncertain time, we decided to keep our students’ momentum going by shifting focus towards an online summer program. Our usual summer music camps were transformed into the first ever SJMA Summer Online Lesson Program, with 130 individual one-on-one weekly lessons delivered to Junior and Senior program students during the month of July. The remainder of summer involved intense research and planning on the part of our staff, not merely to develop and comply with mandated safety protocols for the eventual reopening of on-site instruction, but to re-envision what a well-rounded, high quality music program in this special community could look like post Covid-19.

I cannot over-emphasise how much the care and support of our friends and donors, volunteers and families has meant to us this year. Your calls, emails, donations, kind words and offers to help have truly been the solid foundation on which we continue to stand. Thank you, one and all, for holding up a light for us! I also thank here, with all my heart, our founder Kathryn Walker, a woman of profound compassion and strength, and a friend to us all. Over fourteen years ago, Kathryn gave substance to a vision that children in our community deserve the very best, both in music and in life. She inspired us to work together, to aim high, to see the world through compassionate eyes, and in the face of challenges, to be tenacious. These traits she leaves with us, indelibly ours. This is SJMA.



Treasurer

Jenn Hepburn

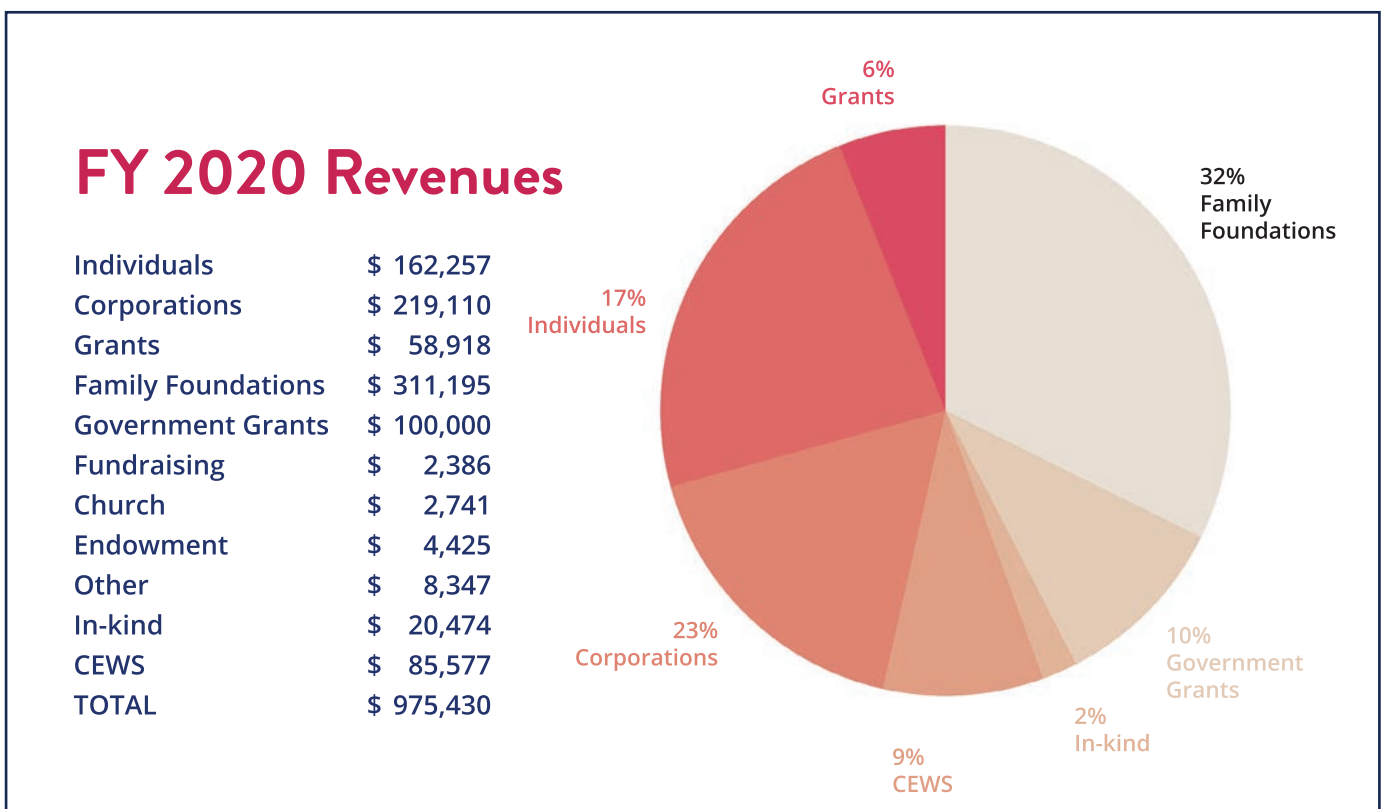
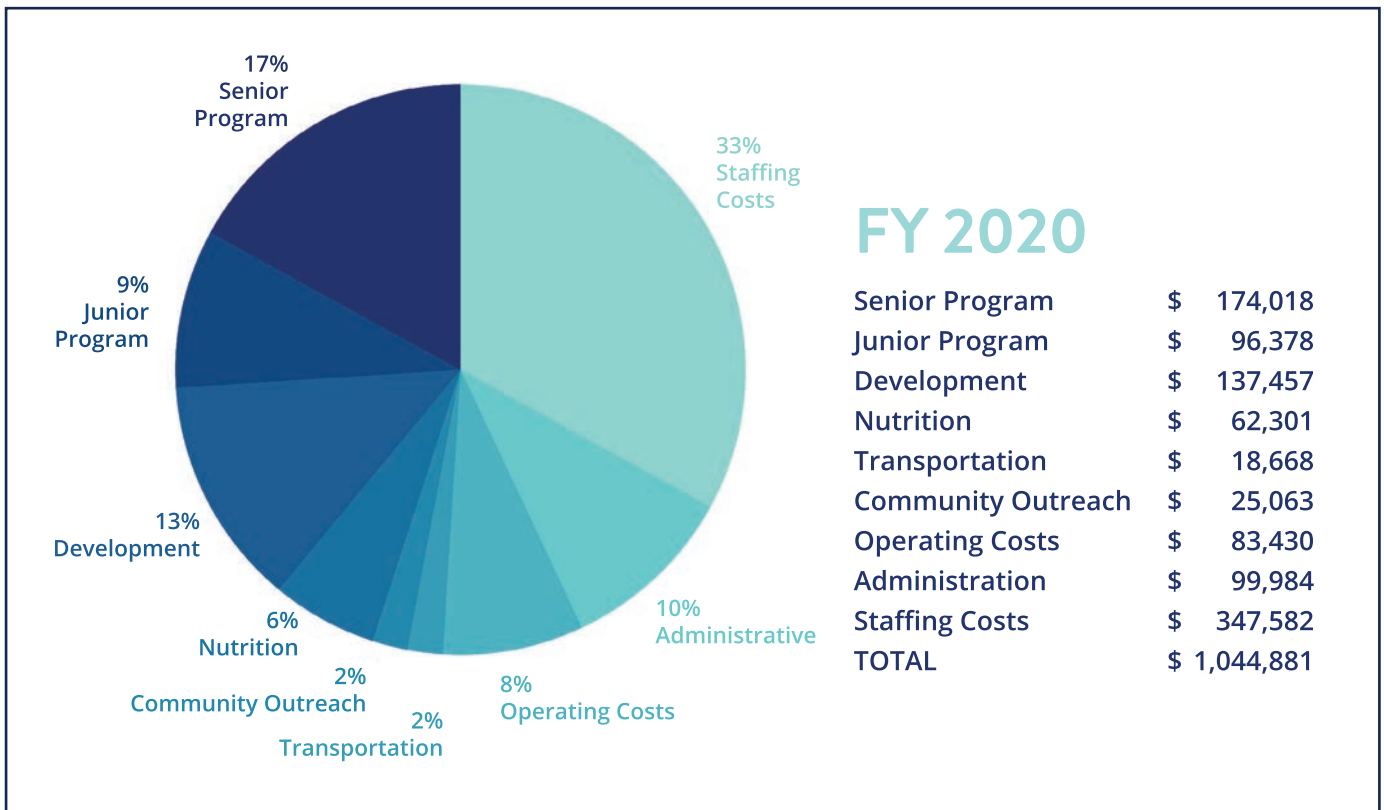
“We plan to be as adaptable and flexible as possible as we continue to operate within the constraints of Covid-19 impacts”

SJMA has had another very successful year due to the strong financial support from our amazing community of generous sponsors. Your donations have enabled us to maintain a significant level of investment into our children with an emphasis on a comprehensive orchestral program while embracing both flexibility and creativity. We are proud to report that we achieved 97% of our budgeted revenue for the most recent fiscal year. Despite a decrease of both individual and corporate donations during the onset and

continued duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, we kept our expenses as focused as possible and we leaned into the government subsidies when available. We plan to be as adaptable and flexible as possible as we continue to operate within the constraints of COVID-19 impacts, both from an operational and contribution perspective. In these unprecedented times, we want to thank each of you for partnering with the SJMA. Your generosity has impacted not only our children but our community and beyond.



Revenue and Expenses at a Glance





Development

Paul Myers

The year 2020 will undoubtedly be thought of by all of us as a year of seismic change. At SJMA we were progressing predictably well in our programs and in the funding needed for them through the first term and beyond. Using a diverse approach to fundraising that included events, academy tours and open houses, grant writing, donor care, and online giving, we had achieved 75% of our funding goals by March. And then we were upended. An unforeseen and invisible power came to challenge us in ways we had never imagined. Coincidentally at this time, we bid farewell in April to my fellow development officer Melodie Mallinder, who did a spectacular job while here, and whose shoes we have yet to fill.

But those challenges did not overwhelm us. I am so pleased that SJMA had already prepared itself in part for the unforeseen, simply because we have built into the organization both resilience and suppleness. In fact, our little-known Values Statement says in part “We embrace flexibility, creativity, and experimentation” and “We seek creative solutions to problems, courage in the face of calculated risk, and committed presence in the face of uncertainties.” In a word, it is that flexibility and resilience - and with the support of a fantastic community - that saved us.

“We seek creative solutions to problems, courage in the face of calculated risk, and committed presence in the face of uncertainties.”

We redirected our funding appeals to meet and manage the crisis, and yet still also succeeded to achieve all our funding goals for the fiscal year. This miracle only happened because SJMA is blessed to have many hundreds of donors, large and small, who know what we are about. All of them deserve our deepest thanks for their generosity, most especially in this time of angst and of shrinking resources.

As to resilience, we have been strategizing anew so that SJMA may continue to thrive in this environment of “new normal.” To date we have reduced our funding needs for the current year by 20%, retained specialist help to spearhead fundraising campaigns, sought new funding opportunities with foundations and others, begun to upgrade our donor database, and also begun the search for additional staff to join the development team. SJMA is such an amazing work that I have little doubt our wide community of partners and friends will continue to help us bring more music into our otherwise dissonant world.





Music Director of Orchestras

José Cerón Ortega



The start of the academic year 2019-2020 was excellent for Saint James Music Academy: brand new groups of students started their musical journey, growing and strengthening our Junior Program; and a significant number of returning Junior students were promoted to the Senior Program. These events resulted in memorable Christmas Concerts in varying locations with interesting and diverse repertoire, where our students had the opportunity to show their artistic and musical progress to different audiences.

Then just after spring break, unexpected challenges came to SJMA and to the world. Fundamental changes needed to be made to the program in a timely manner on behalf of our students and their families. For the first time ever the Academy moved to one-on-one weekly instrument and voice individual online lessons.

I am enormously grateful and pleased to say that SJMA has been able to maintain the musical cohesion of the Junior and Senior Programs despite the prevailing circumstances of Covid-19, thanks to the immediate response from our Board of Directors, the hard-work of our staff and the

crucial support of our donors. The response from our teachers has been also outstanding. With or without prior experience teaching online, our teachers collaborated amongst their colleagues to share their experience, expectations and concerns in order to achieve a similar musical and artistic approach in this completely new community experience for SJMA.

Since the pandemic the Academy has been monitoring the development of the program, assisting students and families in their musical and non-musical needs, as well as evaluating emotional and artistic results in our students through uplifting reports from parents, teachers and staff members. This invaluable information was vital to our decision to extend the online lesson program through the summer, and set the foundation to our current academic year, at least until December 2020.

Although the world is living a new reality, SJMA always has in mind that the Orchestra experience be the program's cornerstone, and looks forward to the day, sooner or later, when we will be all together again for the joy of our students and audiences.



Nutrition Program & Community Life

Olivia Lohan

“Being sensitive to our community members needs, and addressing those needs with care and creativity is part of our mission.”

Nutrition Program

An essential component of our program is providing a safe and nurturing environment for our students to grow and flourish. Our Nutrition Program continues to embody this philosophy with its reliable, warm, inclusive daily presence. Each day that we run the program children have been greeted with a buffet of healthy, beautiful food and a communal space in which to gather. Our 2019/20 year started off in full force serving 84 senior students every Monday and Wednesday, and 76 junior students every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. This year the Nutrition Program has withstood many adjustments due to Covid-19 safety considerations.

Recognizing the importance of keeping nutrition at the core of our program, we rose to the challenges of those adjustments by creating spacious eating arrangements, plexiglass dividers for food service, increased sanitation procedures, and increased food preparation protocols.

Keeping awareness of how many families rely on us for meals, during Covid closure we continued to support our families with support for food security. From March 17 - June 2020 we distributed \$14,625 in grocery gift cards to help families during times of uncertainty and hardships.

Community Life

Community-mindedness is at the heart of our program. Our community includes our students and their families, our volunteers, our teachers, our staff, our supporters, and our neighbours. Being sensitive to our community members' needs, and addressing those needs with care and creativity is part of our mission. One aspect of our Community Life development is providing additional support for our students to build life skills in social, vocational and other areas. This year we ran our pilot program for the Peer Mentorship Program. We learned a lot from the pilot and could see the enormous potential to further develop it. Due to program interruptions

caused by Covid closures we have had some delay introducing the updated version of the program. We are eagerly looking forward to implementing the revised version, which will provide training for mature, senior students to assist in the areas of program delivery and classroom instruction. Each module in the program will consist of learning a new skill and then delivering that skill in the Junior Program (ie: tuning instruments, classroom setup, leadership skills etc.). The aim of the program is to equip students with skills and experiences that contribute to resume building, post-secondary scholarship applications, and self-efficacy.







Volunteer Program

Crucial to the success of SJMA are our amazing volunteers. The morale on site and at events is continuously boosted with the support of our volunteers. This year - in addition to the many parents who volunteered in the kitchen, with Walking School Bus, and who lent their amazing array of skills to so many little maintenance and upgrade projects on onsite - we had upwards of 30 volunteers helping out in all facets of our programs. With at least 14 volunteers in and around the nutrition program, 15-plus volunteers helping out in the various classrooms that make up the Junior and Senior Program, to say nothing of the small but dedicated group of piano teaching volunteers who are an integral part of our Exploring Music Program, there was no shortage of energy and enthusiasm

that our volunteers have always brought to our organization and operations. We are so lucky to have such terrific people give their time and their hearts so generously. This year due to renovations happening in the St.James church, we held our Christmas recital at the Buddhist Hall. This was no small undertaking, but with the efforts of our volunteers, it was a huge success. On March 3rd senior students along with the Nutrition Program hosted a community dinner in honour of our volunteers. This was a fun way that our students could say thank you and show appreciation by preparing a gorgeous long table meal. It was a lovely evening with special performances by our junior choir and a trio of teachers, Negin, Pablo, and our Maestro José.

Music Therapy Program

The Music Therapy Program is a key component in the SJMA experience, and reflective of our commitment to exclude no child from access to music. Here children with learning differences, trauma, anxiety, or behavioural challenges are guided by certified Music Therapists to grow in their knowledge of music and themselves. Sessions are held in a dedicated private space and are primarily one-on-one, or occasionally, in small groups. Through music, children experience greater human connection, reduction of stress, awareness of their emotions, and cognitive development. Therapists at SJMA connect with many of the students through our Exploring Music program, which is an alternative stream to the Junior orchestral program.

Covid-19 necessitated the transition of this program (as with others) to a virtual milieu. The result was mixed: Some children made the transition well to online music therapy while others found it too challenging. Fortunately we were able to connect our therapist with additional students who would benefit from the program, but for whom we previously had no space. The pandemic that we are all living through has effectively brought unprecedented levels of anxiety and stress to children and their families, and the need for providing music therapy increased exponentially. Hence, when Covid-19 came, we were especially fortunate to have a music therapist on the SJMA team.





Public School Outreach Program

Jill Samycia and Evelyn Hunter

The Outreach Program began in 2010 as a response to music education being targeted by budget cuts in our public schools. SJMA stepped up to provide a music experience to children during public school hours. The Outreach Program teaches children from preschool to grade seven in a fun and engaging way. It is a program where “everyone wins.” The kids have an opportunity to learn music and its many benefits. The school staff and administrators are, of course, hugely supportive and grateful for a music component, and with no financial impact to the school. SJMA benefits because the need will always outweigh our ability to meet it, so this is a way that we can bring our gift to others. It also sometimes serves as a recruitment arena, identifying children who would benefit the most from enrollment at SJMA. This year the program was hit particularly hard by the pandemic. Prior to the crisis, music classes

were held at Britannia Elementary and Strathcona Elementary School’s Out of School Care Program, taught by Evelyn Hunter, bringing five hours of instruction weekly to these two student groups. At the same time, Jill Samycia held choir classes at Seymour School six hours weekly. Together the Outreach Program brought a joyful music experience to over 250 children. When Covid-19 hit, Jill was the first teacher to offer a continuation of music for students using pre-recorded videos, which were distributed by the elementary school’s teachers. Jill also taught online one-on-one voice lessons to students identified as facing high levels of isolation. Evelyn Hunter volunteered to conduct personal, physically-distanced musical visits to individual children and their families. Together our teachers worked to help prevent the most vulnerable children from falling between the cracks.



Events & Activities

Fall 2019

- Oct 10** Maestro Sascha Goetzel visit to SJMA
- Oct 16** Special Rehearsal w/ Fred Penner
- Oct 17** Music Heals Gala with Fred Penner, Commodore Ballroom
- Oct 26** SJMA Choir at Jared and Audrey's Wedding, Strathcona Church
- Oct 26** Small Senior group outing to VSO
- Oct 30** SJMA Open House
- Nov 3** SJMA Juniors and Parents to VSO Kids' Konkert
- Nov 13** Music in the Mornings Piano Workshop
- Nov 14** Jazz Ensemble Performance at Carnegie Community Assoc. Fundraiser
- Nov 15** Music in the Mornings Piano Concert
- Nov 18** Jazz Ensemble at '100 Women Who Care' dinner, Steamworks
- Nov 21** Fluff Design performance
- Nov 29** SJMA Orchestra w/Vancouver Welshmen's Choir, Christ Church Cathedral
- Nov 30** Small Senior group outing to VSO
- Dec 3** Junior Family Christmas Concert
- Dec 5** Jazz Ensemble performance at private Christmas Party
- Dec 6** SJMA Annual Christmas Concert, Vancouver Buddhist Temple

Winter / Spring 2020

- Feb 12** Onomatopoeia Workshop with the NOW Society
- Feb 20** Screening of work from Onomatopoeia Workshop, 8EAST
- March 3** Community Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- March 11** Fluevog Performance

Cancelled due to Covid-19

- April 20** Chor Leoni / MYVoice concert and rehearsal with SJMA
- April 25** Small Senior group outing to VSO
- May 22** SJMA Orchestra performance with VSO School of Music, Orpheum Theatre
- June 2** Junior Family Spring Recital
- June 5** Junior Choir performance at Canadian Pediatric Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel
- June 5** SJMA Annual Spring Concert

Messages from Our Parents

Thank you and please thank all the teachers and staff and volunteers for working so hard for the students and their families!! - Eva

Thank you so much for everything and support for kids. - Araceli and Edgar

Thanks for another opportunity to have a summer lesson for my kids. - Evelyn

Sarina loves her teachers and she is very excited to continue. Also it was a really helpful online program in this pandemic situation for kids mental health. Thank you! - Sahel

St James Music Academy is a blessing to our children and community, God bless the team! - Uchechi

Thank you all so much! We are so lucky to be a part of this program and special community. Lots of love to you all! - Sarah

SJMA Scholarship Recipients 2020

We look forward to learning where music takes you next!



Leila Du



Lucie Stieler
Track



Yumai Bishop

