



# Music Beat

UPEI Department of Music  
Newsletter

SPRING 2022

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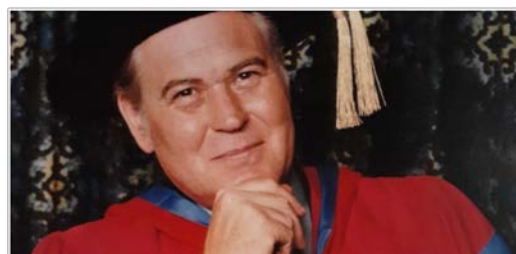
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# Frances McBurnie, Collaborative Pianist with UPEI, Awarded Honorary Doctorate Degree

On Saturday, June 1, 2019, Alexandra Smith, UPEI Bachelor of Music graduate of 2018, and Dr. Karem Simon paid tribute to Mrs. Frances McBurnie at the closing ceremonies of the PEI Provincial Music Festival. At that time, she was acknowledged for her extraordinary, devoted service as a collaborative pianist at UPEI spanning 45 years. The Department of Music gifted her a plaque and a print of Canadian Robert Bateman's *Fox Crossing*.

Since her arrival on Prince Edward Island in 1974, Mrs. McBurnie has been an integral part of the UPEI Music Department. Her visit was to be temporary – she was to cover a one-year appointment at UPEI – but she fell in love with PEI and has remained ever since. For many years she taught elementary music and junior high mathematics at Belfast Consolidated School. Following her school day she would commute to Charlottetown – a forty-minute drive – to work with a variety of UPEI students.

Upon her retirement from the school system in 2008 she significantly increased her involvement at UPEI taking on what would be considered more than a full-time workload of collaborative piano. Those who know Fran have come to understand her deep commitment and relentless work ethic to music making.

Throughout these years she has been particularly immersed with students from the voice, brass, and woodwind studios. From this she acquired an in-depth knowledge of the repertoire together with insights from the respective professors. Being a masterful instructor herself, weekly sessions with Fran became the equivalent of an additional lesson. As a result, our students' musical understandings deepened, and their performance standards soared. She has maintained a passion for and genuine interest in our students together with a willingness to undertake the most demanding repertoire – often the piano part being significantly more difficult than that of the soloist. Moreover, she would often step forward on very short notice to serve students who had performances or juries but were without a pianist. Collaborations with Fran revealed not only the depth and breadth of her musicianship but her ability to feel and react to spontaneous changes from the soloist.

(Continued on Page 4)



*Photo Above: Frances McBurnie at UPEI's convocation ceremony in May 2022.  
Photos Next Page: June 2019 photo with Alexandra Smith, Frances McBurnie, and Dr. Karem Simon, along with plaque, and print of Fox Crossing.*







(Continued from Page 2)

Few consider that both the volume and the intensity of the work we've come to expect of her take a toll on her physical and emotional well-being, family life, as well as her personal and professional relationships. Yet, she continues to remain a fixture of service at UPEI and beyond.

In his address, Karem Simon noted that "throughout my professional career I have worked with numerous pianists including Fran. The best are those who are totally invested in the music, play with conviction, imagination, and individual expression, and whose musical voice is in unison with mine. Frances McBurnie is among the very few who exhibits those qualities."



During UPEI's convocation ceremony of May 12, 2022, Frances McBurnie was awarded an honorary doctorate degree – Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* (for the sake of honor) – acknowledging her unparalleled legacy. Fran's career as a collaborative pianist, teacher, and mentor is absolutely extraordinary, which has enriched the lives of countless students, colleagues, teachers, friends, and audiences. She is among those who genuinely make a difference. We, at the UPEI Department of Music, recognize her as a pillar of the PEI music community, and one whose impact has been unprecedented.



Photo Side: Frances McBurnie receives UPEI hood from interim president Greg Keefe.

Photo Bottom: Frances McBurnie presented with honorary doctorate degree.

# Dr. Frances Gray Performance Competition 2022

## Award Recipients

Our [Winter 2022](#) edition of Music Beat carried a story about this year's competition. The adjudicating panel included three UPEI music graduates – Rowan FitzGerald ('77), Kirsten MacLaine ('98), Hannah O'Donnell ('15) – in addition to Dr. Wendy Shilton, UPEI professor of English; and Jeffrey Bazett-Jones, violist with the Atlantic String Machine. The results of this very well performed competition were:

- Alexandra Sorensen, soprano      First Place and a \$1,000 scholarship
- Olive MacPhail, tuba      Second Place and a \$750 scholarship
- Devyn Collette, saxophone      Third Place and a \$500 scholarship



*Photos Above: Alexandra Sorensen, Olive MacPhail, and Devyn Collette.*





# Chamber Singers Included in Album with the TSO

Congratulations to our Chamber Singers, who under the direction of Sung Ha Shin-Bouey, were part of Against the Grain Theatre's *Messiah/Complex* album with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, which was nominated for a JUNO Award for Classical Album of the Year: Large Ensemble. This unique version of Handel's *Messiah* features four Canadian choirs and a diverse cast of Indigenous and underrepresented soloists from across Canada, singing in Arabic, Dene, English, French, Inuktitut, and Southern Tutchone. The Chamber Singers performance of *Earth Song* by Frank Ticheli is available on our [YouTube channel](#).



Photo Top: UPEI Chamber Singers

Photos Bottom: Photos of UPEI's production of *Dido and Aeneas*: Jim McClean as Aeneas; Alexandra Sorensen as Dido.

Photos Next Page: Additional Photos of UPEI's production of *Dido and Aeneas*.



# Production of *Dido and Aeneas*

Under the leadership of Professor Sung-Ha Shin-Bouey and stage director Stephen Bouey, the Department of Music mounted a production of Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* on April 14th. The production was the result of a year-long engagement of rehearsals featuring students in solo, small ensemble, and full-cast roles. It is available to view on our [YouTube channel](#).



# Dale Sorensen Receives Hessian Award for Excellence in Teaching

On May 4, 2022 as part of the UPEI Faculty Association's Awards and Recognition Ceremony, Dr. Dale Sorensen, whose nomination was initiated by a group of UPEI music students, received a Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching. During the three years since he was appointed to UPEI Dr. Sorensen has been able to significantly increase our number of brass students due to his engaging teaching and active work in recruiting. Performances of Dale's students reveal that they are well taught in terms of brass fundamentals, musical understandings, and style. He communicates and demonstrates effectively, as he is an exemplary musician and pedagogue. He sets high, but achievable goals for his students. UPEI has become a destination for study by leading brass students throughout the Maritimes and beyond.



## Milestones

At a UPEI Department of Music Faculty Council event on May 2, 2022, three members of faculty received tributes recognizing their long service to the institution.



**Professor Dave Shephard** was hired in 1977 and has completed 45 years at UPEI. His duties include the instruction of applied percussion, percussion techniques, jazz ensemble, percussion ensemble, and jazz music education. He has been a terrific resource for the Wind Symphony given all the contemporary music that has been programmed and the austere percussion equipment required. The marching machine for the "March of the Ants" movement of *Bugs* and whirles for *Angels in the Architecture* were built by Dave.

Professor Shephard was a fixture with the Charlottetown Festival Orchestra spending numerous years playing *Anne*, with whom he toured Japan, Connecticut, Toronto, and Ottawa. He served as principal percussionist of the PEISO from the second year of its existence until 2016. Many of his former students have gone on to graduate school and have earned positions in the Ceremonial Guard Band in Ottawa.

Those who have heard Dave perform jazz know that his unique playing style can be described as rather cool and understated. Congratulations Professor Shephard!



## During her visit to campus in 1997 **Professor Sung-Ha**

**Shin-Bouey** impressed with her outstanding musicianship and sound—cornerstones of her teaching and scholarship to this day. Early performances at UPEI and beyond attracted large, enthusiastic crowds. One need only observe the performances of her best students to understand all she has been able to accomplish with her studio work. The transformation of voice students from 1st year to graduation is often remarkable – an endorsement of her fine pedagogy. Moreover, many of these students have gone on to graduate school and careers in the professional field of singing. They all have high praise and affection for her.



Professor Bouey has this fierce determination. This was very noticeable as she prepared final spring performances these last two academic years. The outstanding strength of UPEI's vocal studio was evident in the performance on April 9, 2021 at Park Royal United Church, as current and former singers participated in a varied and engaging program of solos and ensemble pieces. Despite the challenges during this age of COVID-19, Sung Ha remained undeterred in bringing this event to fruition. From conception to execution, her multiple roles as coordinator, director, instructor, accompanist, and mentor were apparent. At a time when musicians rarely performed and audiences seldom gathered, this performance brought our UPEI music community together. Then, this year, with the Omicron variant rampant among us, the odds of pulling off the opera were daunting. Yet, she patiently navigated the complexities of cast members becoming ill, and the mandate imposed by UPEI preventing community people on campus. It, too, was an impressive showcase of our voice program for which her leadership was pivotal. UPEI, and the PEI community at large, has been well served during her 25 years (1997 – 2022) of dedicated service. Congratulations Professor Shin-Bouey!



**Dr. Andrew Zinck** has expended tremendous energy, imagination, and creativity in his teaching throughout his appointment at UPEI. Among his attributes is his sincere interest in reaching every student, something that is not easily accomplished, given the diverse backgrounds and interests of our undergraduates. Andrew excels in the use of innovative teaching methods and materials. Upon his appointment in 1997, he was the first music professor to incorporate technological tools - e-mail, electronic discussion lists, and the World Wide Web. Other initiatives of his included Writing Across the Curriculum strategies, repertoire interviews, and compositional and performance activities. They have all had a positive impact, particularly in courses in which our students previously had a passive role. His web-site, "The Music Mind", was designed as a source for course information, which seemed to portend Moodle.

In recent years, given the shifting demographic and interests of our students, he has developed new courses and significantly reimagined others – his recent Digital Audio and Film Music courses are examples of these. Appropriately, Dr. Zinck was honored as a recipient of a UPEI Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching in May, 2000 and is UPEI's nominee this year for an Atlantic Association of Universities Distinguished Teaching Award.

Dr. Zinck's approach to instruction continues to be progressive. Initiatives including Peer-reviewed e-portfolios, Team based learning and assessment, and Gamifying enhance the student experience.

Dr. Zinck's service to the Department, the University, and the broader community has been exemplary. He combines diligent attention to detail, valuable insights, and a progressive vision in his music department contributions. Andrew has published and delivered academic papers on educational technology and writing across the curriculum among other topics. Some of these involved collaborations with Dr. Wendy Shilton and Dr. June Countryman.

In recent years Andrew was consumed with writing his opera *Confession Stone. The Agnus Dei* has been independently published and is representative of his compositional craft.

Andrew has been devoted to this department's governance serving as Department chair for nine years. Among his achievements was his response to our former President's challenge to reimagine our curriculum. Resulting from this was an extraordinary document that offered multiple streams of an expanded Performing Arts Curriculum. This file was distinguished by its thorough attention to detail, inclusive of course descriptions, staffing requirements, and timelines for implementation. Time will tell whether this institution will have the courage and resources to implement some or all of his vision. Congratulations, Dr. Zinck, on your 25 years (1997 – 2022) of exceptional teaching, scholarship, and service.

## New Administrative Assistant



Photo Above: Marlee Saulnier

Our [Winter 2022](#) edition paid tribute to Ms. Susan Stensch, who is retiring at the end of this month. During her fourteen years as Department of Music administrative assistant she was tirelessly devoted to managing all departmental matters and served our faculty and students very well.

Marlee Saulnier will soon assume administrative assistant duties. She brings to this position ten years of solid training in arts administration, including six years of experience with the Prince Edward Island Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Saulnier has a diverse background as a musician, as she is an accomplished saxophonist, vocalist, pianist, and arranger. The arts are Marlee's true passion and she looks forward to joining the UPEI Music community. Welcome, Marlee!



## Remembering F. Alan Ressor (1936-2022)



The UPEI Department of Music lost one of its builders on March 9, 2022 with the passing of Alan Reesor following a battle with lung cancer. Alan had a distinguished career of teaching, scholarship, and service in the Department of Music at UPEI from 1970 until his retirement in 1997. During this time, he forged an international reputation as an organist and musicologist. He was a valued presence for many of our students for whom his mentorship was impactful. For 19 years he served as Department of Music Chair, during which UPEI built a national reputation for its music education program and organ studio. Dr. Reesor was awarded an honorary doctorate in canon law from the University of King's College in Halifax in 1981, was made an honorary fellow of the Royal Canadian College of Organists in 1997, and performed organ recitals in Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds, England; Dijon, France; Port Perry, London, Oshawa, and Belleville, Ontario, and across the Maritimes.

He was conferred the rank of Professor Emeritus at the 1998 convocation and continued teaching UPEI's organ majors and participating in the department's Music Performance Competition Finals as a judge well past retirement. His legacy includes his outstanding leadership as organist and choirmaster at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Charlottetown.

## Music Graduates 2022

This year's graduating class is small but mighty.

**Megan Grounds**, from Prince George, BC, graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education degree. Her primary concentration was in piano performance and she had a wonderful relationship with our piano professors throughout her degree: Ms. Sarah Hagen and Dr. Magdalena von Eccher. A frequent performer at our Friday afternoon recitals, Megan performed two solo recitals and was a second place prize recipient in the 2020 Dr. Frances Gray Performance Competition. In addition to being on the Dean's Honor List throughout her degree, she was published in the UPEI Arts Review and presented a paper at the Department of Music's *Colloquium Musicum* in December 2020. Megan received two convocation prizes: The Joan Doreen Thompson Memorial Award and the Mary O. Kinch Music Education Prize. Already an informed and skilled pedagogue, Megan intends to stay on PEI and teach music. When asked to describe her most memorable moment at UPEI, she wrote:



*"I have had so many wonderful experiences at UPEI, but one moment I often remember is when my first piano professor, Sarah Hagen, told me in first year that if I could give an audience one beautiful moment in a performance, it wouldn't really matter if the rest of the performance was terrible. This helped me enjoy performing so much more and I love that performing music can be entirely about giving something good and beautiful to the audience, and not at all about yourself."*

You will notice that in addition to the typical gown and hood, Megan Grounds is also wearing a stole that was designed by Mi'kmaq artisan and UPEI employee Corinne Chappell; the plan is to have the presentation of stoles to Indigenous graduates become part of our Convocation tradition. In his address UPEI President Greg Keefe stated "Seven Indigenous graduates were presented with their keepsake stole on Monday evening, and will wear them as they graduate. Our hope is that this will provide them with a visual symbol of accomplishment and pride in their Indigenous heritage. The double curve represents the Mi'kma'ki First Nations, the infinity symbol represents the Métis Peoples, and the polar bear represents the Inuit while the crest on the stole features the four sacred colors: white, yellow, black, and red."



**Alexandra Sorensen**, an alumna of Colonel Gray High School in Charlottetown, graduated with the Bachelor of Music degree majoring in vocal performance. Alexandra was highly active singing with our Chamber Singers, Concert Choir, Jazz Ensemble, and Vocal Octet. Among her most memorable moments were her opera roles: First Lady in *The Magic Flute* (2020) and Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* (2022). Alexandra was exceedingly involved with student governance serving as Treasurer and President of the UPEI Music Society. She had a distinguished performance career at UPEI including Junior and Senior recitals and twice receiving the first-place prize in the Dr. Frances Gray Performance Competition (2020 and 2022). Alexandra received numerous academic awards throughout her degree and at convocation was recognized with the Lena C. McLure Scholarship and The David Austin O'Malley-Keyes Memorial Award. Alexandra will attend the University of Toronto this fall where she will continue her studies in the opera program.



**Ziqing Gao**, from China, graduated with a Bachelor of Music majoring in vocal performance. She was a member of the UPEI Chamber Singers and Concert Choir and was always inspired by her lessons with Professor Sung-Ha Shin-Bouey. Her involvement in both operas *The Magic Flute* and *Dido and Aeneas*, were among her most memorable moments. In addition, she studied piano with Dr. von Eccher, which deepened her musical understandings. Throughout her degree, Ziqing received a variety of academic awards including being named to the Dean's Honor List.



## Grace Notes

- On March 13th Dr. Magdalena von Eccher welcomed the birth of Maximilian Oliver.
- Dr. Margot Rejskind, our aural skills instructor, led performances of two of her choirs – Forte Men's Choir and Island Choral Society – earlier this month.
- Dr. Mark Ramsay's interview as part of our UPEI Distinguished Music Alumni Series appeared on April 15, 2022. This podcast as well as others in the season may be viewed on our [UPEI Music YouTube Channel](#).
- Construction of our new Performing Arts Centre continues and is anticipated to be completed by mid-fall 2022.
- On July 1, 2022, Dr. Dale Sorensen will assume the duties of acting Department of Music Chair, as Dr. Karem Simon will be on sabbatical leave 2022/23.

## On the Web

Keep up to date with our news and activities. 'Like' and follow us on social media:



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**Website:** [www.upei.ca/music](http://www.upei.ca/music)



# Support Performing Arts at UPEI

The University of Prince Edward Island offers music and theatre studies programs that inspire students to excel and share their gifts around the world. With this in mind, we have embarked on a **\$3 million fundraising initiative** to enhance our outstanding programming, provide state-of-the-art equipment, renovate the Dr. Steel Recital Hall, and build a new 400-seat performing arts venue.

*Today, support future generations of students pursuing* a performing arts education at UPEI

## **Please take your seat!**

In recognition of your \$5,000 donation (payable over five years), a plaque engraved with your or your loved one's name will remain forever on a seat in either the Dr. Steel Recital Hall or new performing arts venue.

## **Leadership Gifts**

We would be pleased to recognize your leadership gift by naming a space in one of our theatre venues in your honour.



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To learn more about how you can support performing arts education, contact Kathy Weatherbie at 902-626-6791 or [krweatherbie@upei.ca](mailto:krweatherbie@upei.ca)

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