



# Music Beat

*UPEI Department of Music  
Newsletter*

**SPRING 2023**

## In This Issue

- A Year in Review
- New UPEI Performing Arts Centre Now Open
- Renovations Begin at Dr. Steel Recital Hall
- Student Achievements
- Alumni Achievements
- UPEI Wind Symphony Alumni Reunion
- Faculty Achievements
- Grace Notes
- UPEI Music on the Web
- Support Performing Arts at UPEI
- UPEI Summer Studios

### IN THIS ISSUE



Performing Arts Centre Now Open  
Page 2



2023 Performance Competition  
Page 4



Alumni Receive QEII Jubilee Medal  
Page 6

## A Year in Review

If three years under the spectre of COVID-19 wasn't oppressive enough for our students, they continued to demonstrate their resilience and strength of spirit through several interruptions to the 2022-2023 academic year: Hurricane Fiona, a 2-week break during the 2023 Canada Games, and a 4-week labour disruption.

While challenging for students and faculty alike, the past year also gave us many reasons to be thankful. In the following pages, we will share many Music Department highlights, and celebrate noteworthy achievements by current and graduating students, alumni, and faculty. We hope you enjoy this year in review!

## New UPEI Performing Arts Centre Now Open

On January 27th, 2023, members of our faculty were pleased to give the inaugural performance at our brand new Performing Arts Centre, during an Open House for music industry leaders. This performance was also the first for our brand new Yamaha C7X piano which had arrived just the week before. The clear acoustics of the 400-seat amphitheatre, along with its spacious stage, provides our large ensembles and other artistic organizations in the community with a fantastic new performance space. The backstage area is replete with a small rehearsal room, two large dressing rooms, and storage space. The construction of this new venue has been made possible by donors who have contributed to UPEI's \$3 million Performing Arts fundraising initiative (see more details on page 13).



*Photo Above: Magdalena tries out the new piano in our new Performing Arts Centre*

## Renovations Begin at Dr. Steel Recital Hall

A portion of the money raised through the above-mentioned fundraising campaign has been designated for much-needed renovations of the Dr. Steel Recital Hall, which began on May 2nd, 2023. Performers and audiences alike can look forward to new stage flooring, seating, window treatments, lighting, painting, washrooms, entrance doors, better accessibility, and control booth upgrades. It is anticipated to be completed by late August 2023, just in time for the new academic year.

Stay tuned for a forthcoming grand opening for both venues, and an exciting announcement about a very generous donation! And remember, it's not too late to be a part of this exciting fundraising initiative – see page 13 for information on how you can have your or a loved one's name engraved on a plaque on a seat in either venue!

# Student Achievements

## Music Festival

UPEI music students are always well represented at the PEI Kiwanis Music Festival, from the county level all the way through to the Nationals. Last August, two of our students brought home big awards at the FCMF National Music Festival: Olive MacPhail (tuba) won First Place in the Brass category, and Alexandra Sorensen (mezzo-soprano) won Second Place in the Voice category! These are incredible achievements made possible through much hard work. Congratulations!

Congratulations to all of the competitors representing PEI, including UPEI music student Devyn Collette (saxophone), with a special shout-out to James Ronahan (CGHS) who placed 2nd in the Developing Artist Stream for Musical Theatre.



*Photo Above: Timothy Luk (piano), winner of the Senior Rose Bowl (presented by Dr. Karem Simon)*

*Photo Right: Senior Rose Bowl participants (L to R):*

*Janey-Lynn Perrier (soprano), from the studio of Prof. Sung Ha Shin-Bouey;  
Devyn Collette (saxophone), from the studio of Dr. Nicole Strum;  
Olive MacPhail (tuba), from the studio of Dr. Dale Sorensen;  
Alice Cheng (violin);  
Timothy Luk (piano; winner), from the studio of Dr. Magdalena von Eccher.*

## QCMFA Rose Bowl

More recently (May 2023), several of our students were selected to perform in the Queens County Music Festival Senior Rose Bowl competition. The winner, Timothy Luk, is a 2nd-year pianist from the studio of Magdalena von Eccher. Everyone performed beautifully!





### Dr. Frances Gray Music Performance Competition 2023

On February 5th, 2023, the UPEI Department of Music presented the annual Dr. Frances Gray Music Performance Competition, showcasing five of the department's outstanding emerging artists selected by the music faculty in a preliminary round. The adjudicating panel for the finals consisted of distinguished members of PEI's musical community: Jillian Clow (soprano and Class of 2015 UPEI Music alumna); Madeline Kapp MacDonald (violinist); and Ron Murphy (retired band teacher and Founding Partner of Schools Out Tours Inc.). It was a wonderful recital that showcased our students' fine musicianship and modelled what can be achieved with hard work. The results were:

- Olive MacPhail (tuba) First Place and a \$1,000 scholarship
- Dre Knowles (piano) Second Place and a \$750 scholarship
- Devyn Collette (saxophone) Third Place and a \$500 scholarship
- Pengjiang Fan (trumpet) Finalist and a \$250 scholarship
- Janey-Lynn Perrier (soprano) Finalist and a \$250 scholarship



*Photo top (L to R): Pengjiang Fan, Janey-Lynn Perrier, Olive MacPhail, Devyn Collette, and Dre Knowles.  
Photos bottom: Dr. Frances Gray with (L to R): Olive MacPhail, Dre Knowles, and Devyn Collette.*

## 2021-2022 Dean's Honours List

In November 2022, several of our Music students (majors and minors) were celebrated for their achievement of obtaining the academic standard necessary to make it onto the UPEI Faculty of Arts Dean's Honours List. Congratulations to everyone for this accomplishment. We're proud of your hard work!



*Photo Above (L to R): Isabelle McNeill, Zoe Sullivan, Becca Rose, Javier Santos Dacarett, Olive MacPhail, Ross Boyd, Noelle Pettipas, Dr. Dale Sorensen (Acting Chair), and Janey-Lynn Perrier. Missing from photo: Hannah Aitken, Josie Thibodeau, Jeff Gravina, and Keziah Stoltz.*



*Photo Above (L to R): Nigel Perry, Melissa Lewis, Dr. Karem Simon, Dr. Dale Sorensen, Jeff Gravina, and Olive MacPhail. Missing from photo: Hannah Aitken and Tuli Porcher.*

## 2023 Convocation

Congratulations to UPEI Music's Class of 2023!

Bachelor of Music Education:  
Jeff Gravina, Olive MacPhail

Bachelor of Music:  
Hannah Aitken, Melissa Lewis, Tuli Porcher

Bachelor of Arts (Music):  
Nigel Perry

# Alumni Achievements

The following stories are only a sample of the great things our alumni have accomplished this past year. We are very proud of all our alumni, and ask that you keep us informed of any achievements, large or small.

## Awards and Recognition

In September 2022, Chuck Arsenault (Class of 1992), was presented the 2022 Acadian of the Year award by l'Exposition agricole et le Festival acadien de la région Évangéline. The [press article](#) refers to Chuck's "endearing personality" and cites his generosity and devotion to his music program at l'École Évangéline, and his lasting legacy in the Évangéline region as a whole. Chuck is now the music teacher at l'École François-Buote. Congratulations, Chuck!



Hearty congratulations to four of our alumni who received Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medals this spring, presented by The Honourable Antoinette Perry, Lieutenant Governor of PEI.



Krista Bryson (Class of 2006) – for her service to music education, particularly the expansion of the Three Oaks Senior High School music program.

Tamara Steele (Class of 2004) – as Executive Director of the Black Cultural Society of PEI, she is one of our island's top changemakers and leaders.



Cpl Melanie Walsh-Fraser (Class of 1999) – for her service to our country as a musician with the Canadian Armed Forces, displaying exceptional skill and devotion to duty.

Captain Rory O'Donnell (Class of 2013) – for his unmatched contribution to military and ceremonial events, and selfless service to the public.



Photo Top Left (L to R): MLA Lynne Lund, Krista Bryson, The Honourable Antoinette Perry  
Photo Bottom Left (L to R): Melanie Walsh-Fraser, Her Honour

Photo Top Right (L to R): Tamara Steele (seated), Her Honour  
Photo Bottom Right (L to R): Hannah and Rory O'Donnell, Her Honour

### PEI Symphony Orchestra guest soloists

Noah Malcolm (Class of 2012) was one of five local singer-songwriters featured in the PEISO's Emerging Artist Spotlight Series of videos (available on [YouTube](#)). In his video, which launched the series on March 3rd, Noah performed two original songs accompanied by the PEI Symphony Orchestra, with Dr. Karem Simon conducting. Orchestrations for this project were created by Natalie Williams Calhoun (director of the UPEI String Orchestra).



Two of our alumni, mezzo-sopranos Jillian Clow and Hannah O'Donnell (both from the Class of 2015), were featured soloists with the PEI Symphony Orchestra on March 5th, 2023. Conducted by Dr. Karem Simon, the program featured renditions of works for voice and orchestra by Berlioz, Whitacre, Rossini, and Offenbach, which were very well received by the large audience in attendance.



*Photo Top: Noah Malcolm records original songs with PEISO  
Photo Bottom Left (L to R): Hannah O'Donnell, Jillian Clow*

# UPEI Wind Symphony Alumni Reunion

From December 27th to 29th, 2022, over 60 former members of the UPEI Wind Symphony came together for a three-day reunion to reconnect and rehearse, culminating in a public performance on the 29th at Dr. Steel Recital Hall, conducted by Dr. Karem Simon.



Participating alumni represented graduating classes from 1972 to 2022 – a 50-year timespan covering the entire existence of UPEI. It was a remarkable concert, three years in the making, which included an eclectic mix of traditional and contemporary wind band music featuring some of the treasured pieces from the repertoire.

Of special note were the performances of “Skyline” by Evan Hammell, an emerging composer and former UPEI music student who completed his degree in composition at the University of Toronto, and of “Goodnight Moon” with mezzo-soprano Alexandra Sorensen (Class of 2022) as the featured soloist.

Bravo to all for a musically and artistically rewarding performance which was both an endorsement of the UPEI Music brand and a celebration of the immense expertise and capability of our graduates.

A video of the performance is available on our [YouTube channel](#).

*Photo Top: Dr. Karem Simon conducts the UPEI Wind Symphony Alumni.  
Photo Left (top): Evan Hammell and Karem Simon pose with the score to “Skyline”.  
Photo Left (bottom): Alexandra Sorensen sings “Goodnight Moon”.*





# Faculty Achievements

## Prof. Sung Ha Shin-Bouey

This year, Sung Ha directed two wonderful choral concerts – one in December and one in April – featuring the UPEI Concert Choir, UPEI Chamber Singers, UPEI SSA Ensemble, and vocal soloists from her and Stephen Bouey’s studios. Collaborators included pianists Leo Marchildon and Morgan Saulnier, and cellist Natalie Williams Calhoun.

Sung Ha herself performed as a soloist on the March 19th Faculty Recital, in collaboration with pianist Magdalena von Eccher, flutist Morgan Saulnier, and cellist Natalie Williams Calhoun.

In the Spring 2022 issue of this newsletter, we shared a story about how the UPEI Chamber Singers, under the direction of Sung Ha Shin-Bouey, were selected to perform a chorus in an innovative nation-wide digital production of Handel’s *Messiah*. Produced by Against the Grain Theatre in collaboration with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the *Messiah/Complex* video and digital album continues to receive international critical acclaim, and has been featured by The New York Times, BBC World Service, BBC Today Programme, France Musique, The Los Angeles Times, Boston Globe, and Opera Wire, which called it “A Revolutionary Approach to Handel’s Masterpiece.” In Canada, it was showcased by CBC’s The National, CBC q, The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Xtra, Broadview, Opera Canada, Maclean’s, and LudwigVan.com, where critic Paula Citron described this version of *Messiah* as “one of the single greatest accomplishments in the annals of Canadian classical music.”



On November 7th, 2022, New York-based OPERA America announced that *Messiah/Complex* was the winner of the “Noteworthy Project” award at the inaugural OPERA America Awards for Digital Excellence in Opera, recognizing the best work created for digital platforms by individual producers and organizations across North America. The 2022 winners were selected from over 100 submissions and only 14 finalists.

It is a significant accomplishment for Sung Ha and her Chamber Singers to have been included in this amazing production, which brings attention to our small department from all over the world.

Photo Top: Prof. Sung Ha Shin-Bouey.

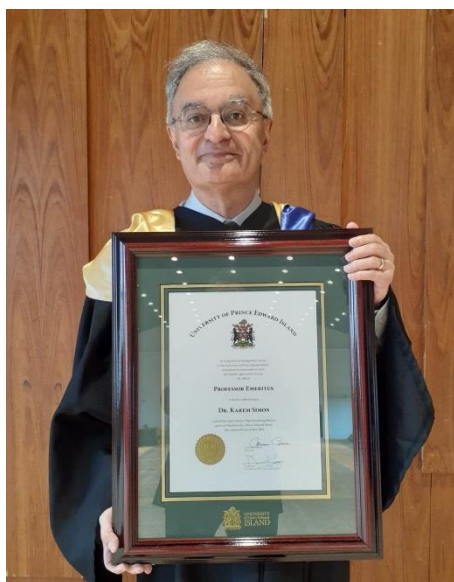
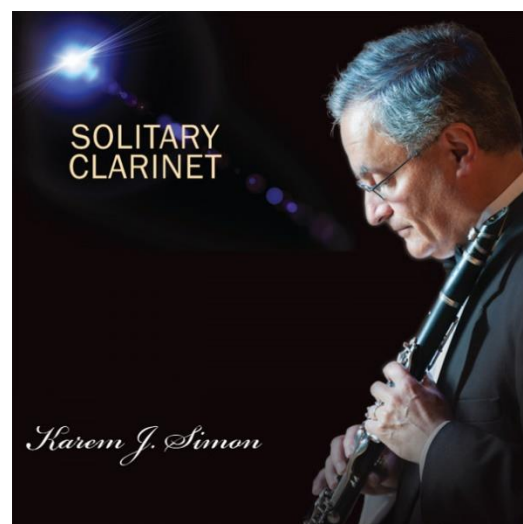
Photo Left: The “Noteworthy Project” award for Digital Excellence in Opera.

## Dr. Karem J. Simon

During a productive sabbatical this past year, Karem presented a number of recitals across PEI in both Fall and Winter terms. These recitals featured a variety of exciting repertoire for clarinet with piano and/or strings, performed with Magdalena von Eccher and members of the Atlantic String Machine.

In addition, Karem conducted the PEI Symphony Orchestra for their Emerging Artist Spotlight Series of videos released throughout the spring on YouTube, and guest conducted a regular season concert on March 5th with a program of beloved chamber orchestra repertoire. Karem also organized and directed the UPEI Wind Symphony Alumni Reunion concert in December.

Karem's solo album, "Solitary Clarinet", was released in November 2022. A collection of thirteen pieces for clarinet alone, the album includes some of Karem's favourite clarinet monologues – character pieces, meditations, songs without words, dances without movement. Spanning three centuries, these works encompass transcriptions, staples of the clarinet repertoire, etudes, and contemporary compositions. The album is available [online](#) and on your favourite streaming services. Physical CDs are available for purchase in the main office at the UPEI Music Department.



As he prepares to retire on August 31st, we congratulate Dr. Karem J. Simon on his appointment to the title of Professor Emeritus at the 2023 Convocation for the Faculty of Arts on May 18th. Such an appointment is approved by Senate after a rigorous nomination process, and only Full Professors who have demonstrated superior achievements are eligible. It is a fitting culmination to this chapter in Dr. Simon's distinguished career.



*Photo Top Right: Karem's album cover*

*Photo Above: Karem holding Prof. Emeritus diploma*

*Photo Right (L to R): Interim President Greg Keefe, Dr. Karem J. Simon, The Honourable Catherine Callbeck (UPEI's Chancellor)*

## Dr. Dale Sorensen

After three years at UPEI on successive term contracts, Dale was appointed to a tenure-track position beginning on July 1st, 2022. Coincidentally, Karem Simon began his sabbatical on this date, and Dale dived in to serve as Acting Chair of the Music Department for this academic year.

In addition to his teaching and administrative duties, Dale maintained a busy performance schedule with the Charlottetown Festival Orchestra (summer 2022), PEI Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Maritime Brass Quintet.

As a soloist who is passionate about commissioning new music for trombone by Canadian composers, Dale gave two world premiere performances this past year. Commissioned with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, Kelly Marie Murphy's *And the Sun Brought Darkness* for trombone and piano, was premiered by Dale on May 31st, 2022, at the annual MusCan Conference at Acadia University in Wolfville, NS. On April 24th, 2023, Dale premiered Roger F. Taylor's *Concerto for Trombone, Strings and Percussion* with Nova Sinfonia in Halifax, NS.



On June 1st, 2023, Dale began a new 3-year term as Chair of the department. We wish him the best in this role!



## Dr. Magdalena von Eccher

Magdalena was also appointed to a tenure-track position beginning on July 1st, 2022, after three years on term contracts. Magdalena's piano studio continues to grow, notably through attracting several international students to UPEI. This year, Magdalena performed recitals with Karem Simon and Nicole Strum, adjudicated at two music festivals in Nova Scotia, and gave piano workshops and masterclasses through the PEI Registered Music Teachers' Association.

On May 19th, 2023, at a Member Celebration Evening of the UPEI Faculty Association, Magdalena received a 2022-2023 Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching, which honours UPEI faculty members who are recognized as possessing outstanding competence in teaching. In the citation read at the ceremony, Magdalena was described as "an elite musician, masterful performer, and outstanding teacher." The testimony given by the three students who nominated Magdalena for the award describes a teacher who excels at creating "an environment that celebrates individuality, inclusivity and equity, welcomes and supports each person, [and ensures] their success academically, socially, and culturally." Congratulations, Magdalena!

## Dr. Andrew Zinck

During UPEI's Awards of Excellence ceremony on May 25th, 2023, Andrew was deservedly recognized with a University Teaching Excellence Award. This award recognizes outstanding contributions to teaching in one or more areas, including teaching effectiveness, teaching innovation, scholarship of teaching and learning, and educational leadership. Andrew has amassed an extraordinary resume of pedagogical innovations, which our students experience on a regular basis and, through his many publications, benefit the wider teaching community.

Andrew has also received a promotion to the rank of Full Professor, effective July 1st, 2023. To say that the promotion process is rigorous would be an understatement! An application for promotion must first be approved by a Department Review Committee, following which it must receive the approval of the appropriate Dean, the University Review Committee, the University President, and finally the Board of Governors. Congratulations, Andrew!



## Grace Notes

- This year in our Distinguished UPEI Music Alumni Series of podcasts, we posted new interviews with Rowan FitzGerald (Class of 1977) and Frances McBurnie (Class of 2022, Honorary Doctorate). The entire series may be viewed on the [UPEI Music YouTube Channel](#).
- The UPEI Department of Music Recital Series will reconvene in Fall 2023. Please regularly check our [Recital Performances web page](#) for the latest updates. You may also send an email to [music@upei.ca](mailto:music@upei.ca) to request to be added to our recital notices email distribution list.
- Many thanks to all our part-time instructors who make it possible for us to offer a comprehensive program, and who enrich the music community at large: Stephen Bouey (voice, Diction), Richard Covey (Theory), Jim Dickson (guitar), Sean Kemp (violin), Morgan Saulnier (flute, Aural Skills), David Shephard (percussion, Jazz Ensemble), Amy Simon (clarinet), Nicole Strum (saxophone, Aural Skills, performance psychology), and Natalie Williams Calhoun (String Orchestra).
- Just over a year ago, we hired Marlee Saulnier as our administrative assistant. We are grateful for all the excellent work she does to assist our students and faculty, and to make our department run smoothly!

## On the Web

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



[@upeimusic](https://www.facebook.com/upeimusic)



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[@upeimusic](https://twitter.com/upeimusic)



[@upeimusic](https://www.youtube.com/upeimusic)



[@upeiwindsymphony](https://www.bccommonsense.ca/@upeiwindsymphony)

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.



**UNIVERSITY**  
of Prince Edward  
**ISLAND**

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)

[upei.ca/performingarts](http://upei.ca/performingarts)





# UPEI SUMMER STUDIOS

**July 3–July 7, 2023**

Join us for a five-day summer chamber music experience for brass, woodwind, percussion, and piano students, aged 14–18.

Warm-up and technique classes  
Musicianship classes  
Chamber music  
Individual lessons  
Workshops  
Final performance

SPACES ARE  
LIMITED AND WILL  
FILL UP QUICKLY!  
REGISTER TODAY!

**Faculty:** Magdalena von Eccher, piano  
Morgan Saulnier, flute  
Amy Simon, clarinet  
Nicole Strum, saxophone  
Dale Sorensen, brass  
Krista Bryson, percussion  
Karem Simon, reed workshop  
Ken Fornetran, wind instrument repair


**Program fee:** \$295.00

**Register at:** [bit.ly/UPEISummerStudios](https://bit.ly/UPEISummerStudios)



Email [nstrum@upei.ca](mailto:nstrum@upei.ca) with any questions.

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