CATCHING UP with our students

A passion for popular music and making videos have helped fourth-year harp student Samantha Ballard tap into unconventional – and large – audiences.

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**CATCHING UP WITH OUR STUDENTS**

**Harp student embraces social media, builds career**

Ballard’s arrangements of tunes from *Game of Thrones* and *How to Train Your Dragon* have attracted attention from popular and classical audiences. Using social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, Ballard has developed tools to showcase her talents and connect with potential employers.

*High Notes* set down with Ballard to discuss her tech-savvy approach to building a career.

**You have a great online presence. As a performer, why did you decide to embrace social media such as YouTube?**

YouTube wasn’t a decision I made as a performer; I started out as a fan. I was looking up harp covers of music from the Legend of Zelda series and there was one song no one had done. I thought, “I could do that.” And it really went from there.

Most of what I put up on YouTube are covers of pop music – namely video game and TV music. Fans of games, shows and movies are passionate about their associated music, and I think it’s an audience that a lot of classical musicians tend to ignore.

**Why is social media an important tool as a performing artist?**

Social media is incredibly important: it’s where everyone is. Clients, audiences, employers. You can open up opportunities just by being online where people can find you. A YouTube channel can build an online portfolio of your work. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr can all be used to announce performance dates and upcoming albums, and provide an inside look at the life of a working musician, which can keep people interested.

**MAKING WAVES**

**UBC composers achieve orchestral residencies**

*Vancouver Sun* contributor David Gordon Duke (BMus’71) reports on the exciting careers of three alumni composers in a guest column for *UBC High Notes*.

Since music courses first went on offer at the University of British Columbia, composition has been a top priority. That three UBC-trained composers now find themselves composers-in-residence with B.C. orchestras underscores the effectiveness of this crucial School of Music program, and of the talented students who flock to it.

In the last few months Jocelyn Morlock (MMus’96, DMA’02), Jared Miller (BMus’10) and undergrad Trevor Hoffmann have begun working with, respectively, the Vancouver Symphony, the Victoria Symphony and the Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra.

With his appointment to the Victoria Symphony, Jared Miller, at 25 is the youngest composer ever named to a composer-in-residence with a major Canadian orchestra. Raised in the Vancouver ‘burbs, Miller came to UBC with divided musical loyalties: roughly equivalent passions for piano and composition. A well-received entry in the Vancouver Symphony’s Jean Coulthard Readings (named after the veteran UBC lecturer and composer) may well have tipped the scales.

Miller was soon off to New York’s prestigious Juilliard School; having completed his master’s degree in 2012, he is now in the final stages of his doctorate, studying with noted American composer John Corigliano. Miller’s music has been played by an impressive number of Canadian and American orchestras, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Contemporary Youth Orchestra and the American Composers Orchestra. His Victoria residency started this summer and he is hard at work on a number of orchestral works to be premiered there during the seasons ahead.

I heard you were also part of the UBC Laptop Orchestra, which recently performed and conducted research in Belgium. What inspired you to sign up?

Not going to lie, the trip to Belgium was a big motivator for me. But I also joined because I really didn’t know anything about electroacoustic music. Now a whole new genre has opened up for me and I actually get it now.

**How has learning about electroacoustic music influenced your development as a harpist?**

I think that more than anything, learning about electroacoustic music has taught me to keep an open mind. Just because you don’t understand something doesn’t mean it’s not good.

**When did you start playing the harp? How did you get into it?**

When I was fifteen, I wanted to pursue a career in music and decided that harp would make a good career. It worked out fairly miraculously! I don’t think I realized what a gamble I was making at the time – but I guess there’s a lot to say for not considering that failure could be an option.

*Read more about Samantha Ballard online at music.ubc.ca/highnotes*
On a rainy Vancouver day in 2008, ethnomusicologist Nathan Hesselink found himself standing outside UBC Thunderbird Arena to hear a concert by Radiohead, a seminal British rock band. That was the humble beginning of a bona fide fan.

“I had never heard their music before and was completely intrigued by their unpredictable, changing rhythms,” said Hesselink, a professor at the UBC School of Music. “If I can’t figure out the beat right away, that gets me excited.”

Intrigued by Radiohead’s music and devout fan base, Hesselink soon discovered that British musicians – particularly those trained in the 70s and 80s – experimented with rhythms in their song introductions to connect with listeners.

Hoffmann is part of the music team that scores such popular animation shows as *The Littlest Pet Shop* and *My Little Pony.* When the Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra decided that its composer-in-residence should be a peer of their young musicians, Hoffmann was chosen from several dozen applicants.

**Jocelyn Morlock**’s appointment at the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra is groundbreaking: she is the first woman to hold the position and the first Vancouver-trained composer to work with Vancouver’s orchestra. Morlock hails from Winnipeg but came to UBC after completing her undergraduate degree at Brandon University.

As a graduate student looking for just the right fit, she found that UBC filled the bill: she had access to a diverse community of composers, including Stephen Chatman, then head of the UBC composition program, and she was able to immerse herself in the vibrant multi-cultural life of Vancouver. This included playing with Michael Tenzer’s Balinese Gamelan Gita Asmara; gamelan proved a seductive musical idiom that has informed many of Morlock’s mature compositions.

This September sees Morlock hard at work, assisting with the programming of contemporary music for various VSO enterprises, starting several new pieces, and helping select works by developing composers for the 2015 installment of the Coulthard Readings.

__For more information on Miller, Hoffmann and Morlock, check out High Notes online or go to their websites:__

[jaredmillermusic.wordpress.com](http://jaredmillermusic.wordpress.com)
[trevorhoffmannmusic.com](http://trevorhoffmannmusic.com)
[jocelynmorlock.com](http://jocelynmorlock.com)

**Exploring the meaning behind rhythm**

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“They would try to fake out the listener as to where the beat was, or they would strip it down so far that you couldn’t really tell what the metre of the song was going to be until you’ve been listening for awhile,” said Hesselink whose article *Radiohead’s “Pyramid Song”: Ambiguity, Rhythm, and Participation* has sparked interest from scholars and aficionados.

“Professors are using the article in their classes and fan sites have linked to it,” said Hesselink who believes in open access to research and published his work in *Music Theory Online*, a leading digital journal accessible to the public.

Through his musical analysis of Radiohead as well as The Police, Hesselink discovered that there was a deeper social meaning behind the composers’ methods: “This process was like sharing insider knowledge and challenging their audiences, who they feel are taking the time to really listen and think about their songs.”

**Communication is key**

For those who are unfamiliar with Hesselink’s career, they might be surprised to find a collection of traditional Korean drums alongside the Radiohead posters and album covers that adorn his office walls. While this may seem like two separate ends of the musical spectrum, ambiguous rhythms and social connection are the connective threads that weave through his work.

*Read more about Nathan Hesselink online at music.ubc.ca/highnotes*
Austrian-Canadian Joseph Kandler built musical ties between beloved countries

For aspiring classical musicians and performers, there is no better place to learn than in Austria, a country deeply rooted in the traditions of Western music.

During her final year of studies at UBC, mezzo-soprano Evanna Chiew (BMus’13) travelled to the Mozarteum International Summer Academy in Salzburg to train with renowned teachers, attend concerts and immerse herself in Austrian culture. As a two-time recipient of the Johann Strauss Foundation Lotte and John Hecht Memorial Scholarship, Chiew was thrilled to have a second chance to deepen her opera studies.

More than 70 UBC students have studied music in Austria, thanks in large part to one man’s commitment to promoting Austrian music and culture.

“I am so grateful for this amazing opportunity to learn and become a better musician,” said Chiew, who completed the four-week intensive program before beginning graduate studies at Yale University. “Austria definitely has a special place in my heart and I look forward to perhaps one day returning—maybe even to sing at the Salzburg Festival!”

Since 1988, the Johann Strauss Foundation Lotte and John Hecht Memorial Scholarship has provided many UBC students with transformative experiences, thanks in large part to the efforts of the late Joseph Kandler (December 13, 1921 – March 25, 2014). He dedicated his life to creating lasting links between Canada and Austria, and provided transformative artistic opportunities for emerging Canadian musicians.

“In Austria, music is an essential part of life. Not having music is the equivalent of not having food,” said Trudy Duller, a close friend of Kandler and past Honorary Vice Consul (Cultural Affairs) of Austria. “Dr. Kandler was passionate about connecting young people with Austrian culture. He believed in never closing doors and exploring all the possibilities.”

Kandler was the founding president of the Johann Strauss Foundations in Edmonton (est. 1975) and Victoria (est. 1985), which created Johann Strauss Foundations in Edmonton (est. 1975) and Victoria (est. 1985), which created Johann Strauss Foundations in Edmonton (est. 1975) and Victoria (est. 1985), which created Johann Strauss Foundations in Edmonton (est. 1975) and Victoria (est. 1985), which created...