



Bits & Bites

News from Around the
Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts

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Welcome back to **HCA!**

A Letter from the Artistic Director

Dear HCA Families,

Welcome back – and to those joining us for the first time, welcome to HCA!

One of the great joys of this work is watching what happens between September and June: students grow in skill, of course, but also in confidence, curiosity, resilience and independence. Our hope is that HCA is not only a place to learn an art form, but a place to discover what the creative process can teach you about yourself.

Over the past few years, I have loved seeing our community grow beyond our youth programs! Adult Ballet has taken off, and enrolment across music, theatre, dance and visual arts continues to rise. At a time when so much of life happens on screens, it feels more important than ever to have places where people of all ages can gather in a room and make something together.

There is plenty to look forward to this year. Our **Winter Music Gala**, **Winter Dance Recital** and **Winter Theatre Showcases** offer students low-pressure opportunities to perform and celebrate their progress before our larger June events. Celebration Week will also invite families into music performance and dance classes to see that progress firsthand.

I also encourage HCA families to take advantage of the family discount for our **Performing Arts Sunday Series (PASS)**, our professional performance series in the Black Box Theatre. Seeing exceptional artists perform on the same stage our students use is an important part of learning the craft, and making those experiences accessible to our students remains a priority.

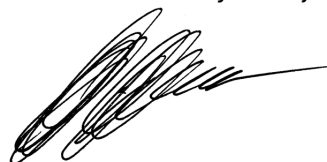
For students looking to stretch themselves further, we've introduced **Creative Futures** and **Step Up**, giving dance and theatre students more opportunities to create, work with artistic mentors and share their work. We're also exploring the return of an expanded **Gym for Dancers** program, formerly Excel, for dancers of all ages, from child to adult. If this is something you or your dancer would be interested in, we'd love to hear from you!

Behind the scenes, we're working toward MyHCA, a new system that will eventually replace JackRabbit. We want to get the transition right rather than rush it, so you may notice some changes in how we communicate and share information in the meantime. Our goal is to spend more time connecting directly with you.

The kind of environment we strive to create depends on communication. If there is something we're doing well, we're always glad to hear it. If there is something we could do better, please tell us that too. Healthy, welcoming creative communities are built together.

Most of all, thank you for choosing to spend part of your week with us. Whether you're joining us for the first time or have been part of HCA for years, we're very glad you're here.

Here's to a terrific year together!



Vitek Wincza

Founder, Artistic & Executive Director

Dates to Know

Term One

Important Dates & Upcoming Events

September

Sep. 12	First day of classes
Sep. 12 – Dec. 5	Term One

October

Oct. 12	Thanksgiving HCA Closed
Oct. 26 – Oct. 31	Halloween week Wear your costumes to class!

November

Nov. 1	Special Event: <u>Zemlinsky Quartet</u> → Performing Arts Sunday Series
Nov. 14	Winter Dance Recital tickets on sale
Nov. 29	Music Performance Classes HCA Music School

December

Dec. 5	Music Performance Classes HCA Music School
Dec. 6	Special Event: <u>Glenn Paul Trio</u> → Performing Arts Sunday Series
Dec. 7 – Mar. 13	Term Two
Dec. 13	Winter Dance Recital HCA School of Dance
Dec. 18	HCA Family Holiday Party
Dec. 19	Musical Theatre Ensemble Showcase HCA Theatre School
Dec. 19	Winter Music Gala HCA Music School
Dec. 14 – Dec. 19	Celebration Week!
Dec. 20 – Jan. 3	Winter Holidays HCA Closed



Faculty Spotlight

A Conversation with Victor Xu

Pianist. Composer. Educator.

We sat down with new music faculty member **Victor Xu** to talk about his musical journey, his teaching philosophy, and what he's most excited for at HCA

What was the first song or piece that made you want to become a musician?

Some of my earliest musical inspirations were from my older brother, who put me on to Michael Jackson and Alicia Keys when I was just starting piano lessons. At 9 years old, I realized that I could learn some of their music by ear, which in many ways kick-started my passion for piano.

You work in everything from jazz and R&B to hip hop, pop, and rock. What genre do you find yourself returning to most often?

As a fan of all music, I'm always looking for new genres to widen my knowledge of music in the world. Currently I'm listening to a lot of Brazilian jazz fusion, bluegrass, and modern Detroit rap.

What's something students might be surprised to learn about being a professional pianist or music producer?

One might be surprised at the diverse range of jobs a musician might be hired for. This past summer I played at a wedding, nightclub, retirement home, music festival, birthday party, and an island retreat all within the same month.

You've performed at some incredible events, including the JUNO Awards Opening Night and TD Jazz Festival. Is there a performance that especially sticks with you?

I performed at an art gallery in Caen, France, where the windows overlooked a dilapidated castle right next door! (Église Saint-Étienne-le-Vieux)

How does your work as a composer and producer influence the way you teach piano?

My composing work helps me approach teaching from a creative perspective, integrating skills like learning music by ear, improvising, songwriting, and developing an understanding of music in one's own way.

What do you hope students feel when they leave one of your lessons?

I want students to leave inspired, and excited to take a project home. Whether it's having learned one of their favourite songs, programming drums, or composing a song, my goal is to nurture the excitement for music.

If a student wants to start writing their own music but has no idea where to begin, what would you tell them?

There are endless ways to approach writing. Getting started is as easy as being prompted though a game or challenge, of which I have many!

Rapid Fire!

What are you listening to right now?
Easy Lovers by Piero Piccioni

What's one song you wish you'd written?
Hey Ya! by OutKast

Who would be your dream artist to collaborate with?
James Blake

Music Student Accomplishments

Kasia Gasior *Piano & Cello*

Timothy Lindo

RCM Level 2 Cello – First Class Honours with Distinction

Sophia Wee

RCM Level 6 Piano – Honours

Helen Hong *Violin*

Samantha Alvarez-Villarica

- Accepted into the Music & Business program at University of Western Ontario
- Hamilton Music Festival 2026 Scholarship winner

Sohan Mukherjee

- Ontario Music Festival Association Provincials Level 3 Violin – First Place
- RCM Level 3 Violin – First Class Honours with Distinction
- HCA 2026 Junior Music Scholarship winner

Jacklyn Sparrow

- RCM Level 2 Violin – First Class Honours

Sara Sparrow

- RCM Level 1 Violin – First Class Honours

Willow Yiannakoulis

RCM Piano Exam Level 8 – First Class Honours

Timothy Lindo

RCM Piano Exam Level 4 – Honours

Roland Fix *Voice*

Jordan De Sousa is a semi-finalist for Canadian Opera Company Centre Stage: Ensemble Studio Competition in early October. We wish him the best of luck!

Jamal Al Titi

Dean Artists Management signed baritone Jamal Al Titi for general management on May 26, 2026. He was recently named a winner of the 2026 Mécénat Musica Vocal Discovery Prize, which provides six years of early career funding. He is set to make company debuts with Edmonton Opera as Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* and with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal as Masetto in *Don Giovanni*.

Irina Jacob *Piano*

Gregoire Swanepoel

RCM Piano Level 4 – Honours

Jacklyn Sparrow

RCM Piano Level 3 – Honours

Arush Mukherjee

RCM Piano Level 2 – Honours

Katherine Beyers

RCM Piano Level 7

Maximilian Medina

RCM Piano Level 3 – Honours

Matthew Oliynyk

RCM Piano Level 2

Isla Hoaran-Quintanilla

RCM Piano Level 2 – Honours

Alex Ingram

RCM Piano Level 7 – First Class Honours

Yara Faddoul

RCM Piano Level 4 – Honours

Marc Faddoul

RCM Piano Level 7 – Honours

Eli Faddoul

RCM Piano Level 8 – Honours

Severin Cliff

RCM Piano Level 4 – Honours

Maya Milivojevic

RCM Piano Level 2 – Honours

Rebecca Garcia

RCM Piano Level 3 – First Class Honours

David Parkitny

RCM Music Theory Level 5 – First Class Honours with Distinction

Matthew Parkitny

RCM Music Theory Level 5 – First Class Honours with Distinction

ARTASIA

Artasia brings children together, community wide, to discover the transformative power of the arts.

This summer, Artasia inspired **5,001 children, 406 caregivers, 813 educators, and 23 artist educators** with sensorial imaginations. Thanks to **12 community partners**, we had presence in **60 neighbourhoods**.



Arts For All (AFA) is a charitable organization of the Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts. AFA delivers innovative arts programming, mentorship and employment opportunities that foster civic engagement making arts accessible in the greater Hamilton region. Since 1999, Arts For All has reached children and youth across the GTHA with innovative, quality arts education and community arts programs.

Each of the seven flagship programs supports the mission of creating access to arts for the community all year round. Learn more at artsforall.co.



resonance CHOIR

is beginning their **10th season** in partnership with the Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre!



Artists in NEIGHBOURHOODS

is starting its **3rd year**, connecting **16 Artists** to Early Learning and Child Care and After School Programs.





November 01, 2026
ZEMLINSKY QUARTET
An Evening of World-Class Chamber Music



December 06, 2026
GLENN PAUL TRIO
A Charlie Brown Christmas



February 14, 2027
VALERIE TRYON
Celebrate Valentine's Day with Romantic Classics
This event is generously sponsored by François Verschaeve



March 14, 2027
DAVID JALBERT
A National Treasure of Classical
Piano Performance



April 11, 2027
THAT CHOIR
Experience the Power of
16 Voices in Unison

[Tap for tickets](#)

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS 2026/2027 SPONSORS



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un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



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