

Ushering in a New Season of Creativity

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR by Vitek Wincza

As we look ahead to a bright and sunny spring, I'm excited to see our students continue to grow and challenge themselves through their art. This newsletter highlights the progress and achievements of our community, as well as the opportunities ahead. Together, we're shaping the future of the arts – let's keep that momentum going!

As we step into this season, our ballet students will be shifting focus toward exam preparation, which is an exciting milestone that showcases their hard work and dedication. We're also in a thrilling period of program development! Our **Excel Ballet Program** continues to be a huge success, offering dancers the chance to refine their technique, build flexibility, and expand their dance vocabulary in ways that stretch beyond regular class. Working with Yancieth and seeing our dancers

flourish has been such a rewarding experience! For those with a passion for choreography, **Creative Futures** is back! This program is an incredible opportunity to create your choreography and build a dance performance from the ground up – proving to yourself that if you can do this, you can do anything. I'm so proud to say that our four schools are thriving, with exciting expansions in both adult programming and early arts education.

As we look ahead to warmer days, **summer camp** registration is already 50% full! If you're looking for a summer filled with creativity, movement, and fun, be sure to secure your spot soon.

Our sister organizations are also buzzing with activity. HCA Dance + Theatre's **Performing Arts Sunday Series (PASS)** is bringing six world-renowned artists to our stage this spring – an inspiring opportunity for students and families alike. Meanwhile, Arts For All has launched **Artists in Neighbourhoods**, a city-wide project providing creative arts programming for early years centres across Hamilton.



It's a busy and exciting season, and my team and I are thrilled to be shaping the year ahead with all of you. Thank you for being part of our community. Wishing you a year filled with success, health, and creativity.

Let the dream continue!

Vitek Wincza
 Founder & Artistic Director

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Teacher Spotlight: Bohdana Liashko



★ [LEARN MORE ABOUT BOHDANA](#)

Bohdana Liashko is a talented music conductor and educator with a master's degree in conducting and pedagogy from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Originally from Ukraine, she has many years of experience teaching vocal, piano, and music theory, and is passionate about helping students of all ages understand and love music! We are so pleased to welcome Bohdana to the HCA Music Faculty!

1. What song do you currently have on repeat?

I usually listen Ukrainian music. If I had to choose one song, it would be Tina Karol - Roses.

2. What is your favourite cold-weather snack or drink?

My favourite is coffee.

3. What's your favourite hobby outside of music?

Travelling.

4. If you could snap your fingers and become an expert at anything, what would you become an expert in?

I would choose theatre.

5. What is your favourite part about teaching?

To share my knowledge with others, and see how my students improve.



Reliquary

SARAH SPROULE

CURATED BY BRIANNA SEFERIADES



SATURDAY, JANUARY 18 – SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2025

NOW SHOWING IN THE HCA GALLERY





Term Two Important Dates

Term Two

December 2 – March 8

Monday, February 17

Family Day (HCA closed)

Saturday, March 1

Sunday, March 2

Music Performance Classes

Saturday, March 1

Creative Futures Auditions
Ballet Exam Fees Due

March 3 – March 8

Celebration Week!

Friday, March 7

Teen & Advanced Teen Acting
Devised Theatre Presentations

Saturday, March 8

Senior Musical Theatre Ensemble
Solo Showcase

March 9 – March 15

March Break (HCA Closed)

Monday, March 17

Classes Resume

Sunday, March 16

PASS Presents Janina Fialkowska

Friday, April 18 – Sunday, April 20

Easter Long Weekend (HCA Closed)

Saturday, April 26

HCA Celebrates! Tickets on sale



COMMUNITY SHOUT OUTS

*Our community is up to some spectacular things in their artistic journeys!
Join us in celebrating some of these fantastic milestones.*

Music Student Accomplishments

Instructor: Irina Jacob – Piano

- **Jasmine-Maya Justin** RCM Level 7 Piano - Pass
- **Alex Ingram** RCM Level 5 Piano - First Class Honours, RCM Level 5 and Theory - First Class Honours with Distinction
- **Sebastian Erez** RCM Level 2 Piano - First Class Honours
- **Jacklyn Sparrow** RCM Level I Piano - First Class Honours
- **Eli Faddoul** RCM Level 6 Piano - First Class Honours
- **Marc Faddoul** RCM Level 5 Piano - First Class Honours
- **Yara Faddoul** RCM Level 2 Piano - First Class Honours
- **Charlotte Barbatano Koekuyt** RCM Level 3 Piano - First Class Honours
- **Paris Barbatano Koekuyt** RCM Level 3 Piano - First Class Honours
- **Rose-Laila Justin** RCM Level 5 Piano - Honours
- **Tianna Lelia** RCM Level 2 Piano - First Class Honours
- **Cynthia Min** ARCT History

Instructor: Helen Hong - Violin

- **Tianna Lelia** RCM Violin Level 1 - First Class Honours with Distinction
- **Mihidini Edangoda** RCM Violin Level 1 - First Class Honours

An Important Update from the Artistic Director Regarding Parking for HCA Families

Dear HCA Families,

We are writing to inform you of an important parking change effective March 1, 2025.

For 35 years, we've had access to the Go Centre parking lot as a courtesy, which we greatly appreciate. However, due to major reconstruction at the Hamilton GO Centre Station by Metrolinx, this lot will no longer be available after February 28th. While we have not yet received a timeline for completion, we are actively seeking alternatives.

New Parking, Drop-Off & Pick-Up Measures

We have secured 8 parking spots in the alleyway between 111 McNab St. and 117 McNab St. for HCA families.

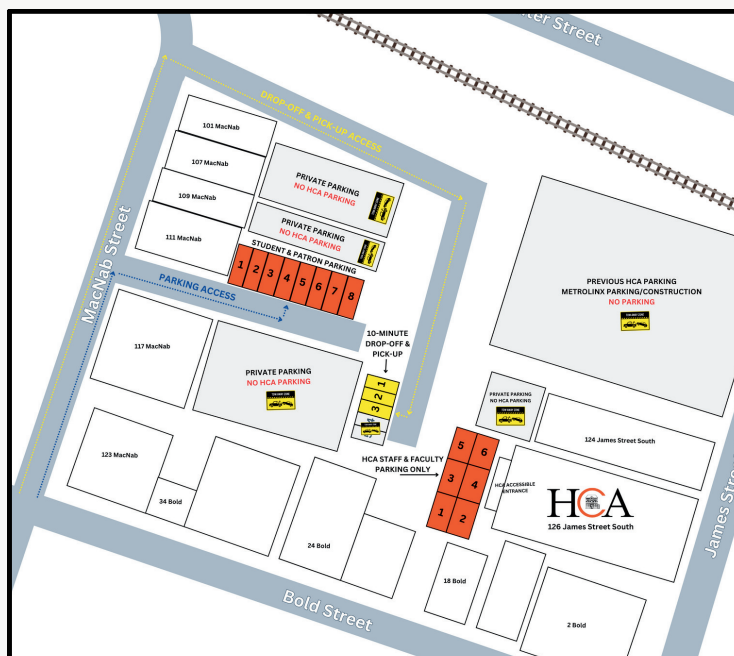
Additionally, 3 drop-off spots (max. 10-15 min.) will be available Monday-Friday, 4:30-9:30 pm, and Saturday, 9-5 pm, clearly marked with green labels (1, 2, 3). These are accessible from the original parking lot entrance.

Please respect our neighbours by not using other numbered spots (4 and 5) or parking outside designated hours. HCA is not responsible for towed vehicles.

A map is attached for reference – please keep it handy as we adjust to this new system.

The accessible entrance at the back will remain open during operational hours for direct access.

Lastly, street parking is often free after 6 pm Monday-Friday and on Saturdays (always check signage). We encourage using these options to ease congestion.



We appreciate your patience as we explore more parking solutions and will continue working to minimize disruptions. Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Warm regards,

Vitek Wincza
Artistic and Executive Director
Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts

A Lifelong Love of Music: Jordyn Kavanagh's Journey at HCA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: JORDYN KAVANAGH by Stephanie Lawlor

For **Jordyn Kavanagh**, music has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember.

A dedicated pianist and long-time student at HCA, Jordyn's journey began when she was just three or four years old.

"I started with piano lessons, but I also did some singing, dancing, and even acted in a play," she recalls. "One of my core memories is performing in front of everyone at summer camp – it was so much fun!"

Now studying at Level 10 piano under the guidance of HCA piano instructor Michael Andrushko, Jordyn credits her father as a major inspiration.



Jordyn Kavanagh at HCA

"My home was always filled with music," she says. "It's such a blessing, and I want to share that with my family one day."

While her passion for piano is undeniable, Jordyn also dreams of incorporating music into her career – particularly in the field of music therapy.

Her relationship with her piano teacher, Michael, is something truly special.

"Michael has been my teacher for almost 14 years. He's seen me grow up, and I've seen him grow too. He feels like part of the family," Jordyn says. More than just technical skills, Michael has taught her the emotional depth of performing. "If you're completely immersed in the music, you can't go wrong. People watching you will feel it too."

Jordyn finds herself particularly drawn to the dreamy, atmospheric compositions of Debussy and Ravel.

"Debussy's *Rêverie* and *Derriere Arabesque* are some of my favourites," she shares. "And *Miroirs* by Ravel – it's the most beautiful piece I've ever heard. Learning it is one of my goals."

Outside of music, Jordyn leads a well-rounded life. She plays soccer, enjoys science at school, sings, and plays guitar – though she modestly admits it's mostly self-taught. But



Jordyn and her piano instructor,
Michael Andrushko

no matter what she pursues, HCA remains a defining part of her journey.

"Being a part of the community at HCA has been such a privilege. I thank my parents for getting me involved and encouraging me to keep going. The opportunities that have opened up to me because of HCA are amazing."

For young musicians just starting their studies, Jordyn has one key piece of advice: "Have fun! Don't stress – just make sounds, dance while you play, and enjoy feeling the music."

With a heart full of passion and a future bright with possibility, Jordyn Kavanagh's musical journey is just beginning.



Upcoming Student Performances



HCA School of Dance

Saturday, June 21- **HCA Celebrates!**



HCA Theatre School

Friday, March 7 - **The Evolution of Iris Carter**
& **Entirely Us** Teen & Advanced Teen Acting

Saturday, March 8 - **Winter Blooms**
Senior Musical Theatre Ensemble Solo Showcase



HCA Music School

Saturday, March 1 & Sunday, March 2 -
Winter Music Performance Classes

Sunday, June 1 & Sunday, June 8 -
Spring Music Performance Classes

Saturday, June 14 - **Music Gala**



HCA School of Visual Arts

June 2025 - **Visual Arts Student Exhibition (VASE)**



Kinder All Arts Exploration
Children's All Arts Exploration
Triple Threat Gotta Dance!
Dance Intensive

Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts

SUMMER CAMPS

[Learn More!](#)

Group Music Lessons: A Holistic Approach

FACULTY CONTRIBUTION by Sihaam Veldman, HCA Music School Coordinator

Why should my kid attend group music lessons?

That's a question you might catch yourself asking. Today, I'm going to share with you how important group music classes are for young musicians. They encourage musical, social and personal growth.

The most obvious benefit of group lessons is the development of fundamental music skills. It's true that group music lessons can be more affordable, but they also provide something that private lessons don't—ensemble playing. This involves splitting a song into parts and assigning those parts to different groups of students. Ensemble playing is SO important because students learn to maintain a steady tempo while listening to other musicians. With an instructor's guidance, students can participate at a very early stage. I find this approach benefits my students no matter what level they're at. Advanced students can take on more demanding parts

while less advanced students can build confidence as they hear harmonies and melodies sounding together. Most importantly, musicians will find ensemble playing extremely rewarding since it allows them to present a more complete version of their song through teamwork! Speaking of teamwork, group lessons naturally create a sense of community, both in class and at home. Students make friends with their classmates at the start of term. For the rest of the year, they share their progress with these friends and celebrate achievements together. Sometimes, a gentle wind of competition enters the atmosphere. I've witnessed young musicians push themselves to reach a friend's skill level or even surpass it. What's also neat is that this scenario can be a chance for young children to learn how to appropriately support classmates, no matter their skill level. Throughout the whole process, their music instructor motivates them to focus, applauds hard work and progress, as well as models



supportive in-class behaviour. Something you might not know is that group music lessons offered at the HCA require parental attendance and involvement. In this way, the music instructor can develop a meaningful relationship with both student and parent. Non-musical parents can learn alongside their children which gives them the tools to support their child during at-home music making. What I've also observed is that children are instinctively more invested in music if their parent communicates interest. What does this look like? Basically, it involves making music together! In class and at home, this could involve parents participating in singing or actions, helping guide their child's hand movements, applauding their efforts, and asking questions. Sometimes just being available as an audience is a powerful way to express support! In this way, ➔



group lessons can encourage a continuous community of music that extends far beyond the classroom walls.

Finally, group music lessons can set the stage for personal growth. Music is a discipline as well as an art so it is natural that students will face challenges. These challenges vary from person to person. Many kids face physical limitations such as still-developing fine motor skills or small hands unable to form full chords.

Some students might struggle with understanding their teacher's instructions while others might feel overstimulated by the overlapping sounds in their class. For some children, emotional regulation is a huge hurdle. It's easy to become frustrated with their inability to sing or play perfectly right off the bat. These obstacles happen in private music lessons as well as the group format. The difference is that group lessons intrinsically involve students working through these challenges in front of an audience. This can definitely heighten the intensity of each child's hurdle, especially if no other student in their class faces a similar



challenge. However, I feel that the positives of this scenario outweigh the negatives for two reasons. Firstly, group lesson students might see their classmates facing different disadvantages so it's likely that they will gain a broader understanding of their friends as well as the world at large. Secondly, these children get the opportunity to encourage their peers, wait or listen patiently, and cheer on their successes. These early experiences of pushing through hardship and finally emerging victorious—all with the

support of friends, family, and leaders—are formative for these kids!

As I am sure you can tell, I am very passionate about the benefits of music education. I firmly believe that it is an art and discipline that can benefit humans on multiple levels. In the group setting, music lessons can equip young children with foundational musical skills, allow them to feel the love and support of their community, and provide opportunities for character development.



Sihaam Veldman teaches private music lessons, group music classes, and Limitless Lessons. She is the HCA Music School Coordinator.

★ [LEARN MORE ABOUT SIHAAM](#)

A reminder...

HCA strives to offer a nut and scent-free environment to our students. Please consider the health and safety of others when packing snacks or wearing strongly-scented perfumes. Thank you for your support.



PASS

PERFORMING ARTS SUNDAY SERIES

2025 SPRING SEASON

World-Class Artists,
Live in Hamilton!

See some of the world's
finest musicians perform
on our very own Black Box
Theatre stage!

Tickets range from
\$35 - \$50

HCA students can use
promo code **HCA2425** when
booking for \$20 tickets.

Order yours now at
[HCADanceTheatre.com](https://www.hcadancetheatre.com)
or stop by the front desk.



PIANO
SUNDAY, MARCH 16
JANINA FIALKOWSKA
THE LEGEND RETURNS!



MASTERCLASS
FRIDAY, MARCH 28
OPERA MASTERCLASS
THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN OPERA TAKES THE STAGE



OPERA
SUNDAY, MARCH 30
KATHERINE WHYTE
STRAIGHT FROM THE METROPOLITAN OPERA



MUSIC
SUNDAY, APRIL 13
PAYADORA
TAKING EUROPE BY STORM *In memory of Robert Horwath*



PIANO
SUNDAY, MAY 4
VALERIE TRYON
VALERIE'S FAVOURITES
Generously sponsored by François Verschaeve



MUSIC
SUNDAY, MAY 18
CHICAGO BRASS
ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST BRASS QUINTETS