Thank you for your generosity.
When I came to McGill in 1990 to pursue graduate studies in composition with Professor John Rea, my studies were made possible thanks to the generosity of the university’s supporters. That generosity has had a profound impact on my life, and today I am proud to be a member of the Schulich School of Music’s amazing artistic and intellectual community, as a professor, Dean, and, of course, alumnus.

When I was named Dean of the School five years ago, I was given the tremendous honour of serving the school, its faculty, alumni, friends, and above all, its students. As Dean, I have engaged with our exceptional students, witnessing the dedication and commitment they bring to their studies. And as Dean I have had the responsibility, and the pleasure, of doing all I can to offer them transformative experiences and opportunities for enrichment by providing everything from musical instruments to funding for participating in competitions to financial support for recruiting and retaining the very best students and professors.

Thanks to Seymour Schulich’s transformational gift in 2005, the past decade has seen the School develop into a world-leading institution. Donor support has been crucial to our success, and will continue to be crucial as we go forward. So I am especially delighted that we have again received a gift of exemplary generosity from our long-time friend and supporter Elizabeth Wirth. This past fall we named the New Music Building the Elizabeth Wirth Music Building, in recognition of all that she has done – not just her most recent gift, but also her long history of support, both philanthropic and, as the Chair of the School’s Advisory Board, in time and energy. Her gift and others that you will read about in this report enable us to attract excellent students and nurture their intellectual and artistic growth.

Your gifts offer more than just financial help. They also recognize our work at the forefront of music research and performance, and serve as a wonderful and much-appreciated sign that you value what we are doing.

I also want to thank you for being a major part of the extraordinary five years I have experienced as Dean. In this time, I have witnessed many important accomplishments that would not have happened without your support: from the completion of the Music Multimedia Room’s Control Room to the success of the McGill Concerto Competitions and the McGill Symphony Orchestra’s milestone appearance in Toronto in November 2015, to the creation of the Instrument Project that provides students with the tools they need to pursue their education, and much more. With your help, the Schulich School of Music will continue to grow as a world leader in music research, performance and education. I wish our new interim Dean Julie Cumming the same pleasures that I have enjoyed during my tenure in this role: the opportunities to engage with brilliant students and faculty members, and the privilege of meeting committed, generous and visionary supporters of music such as yourselves.

Sean Ferguson
Associate Professor of Composition
Outgoing Dean, Schulich School of Music
McGill University
Elizabeth Wirth has great affection for the Schulich School of Music. She loves music, she loves opera, but above all she loves our students!

– Sean Ferguson, Outgoing Dean of the Schulich School of Music
Elizabeth Wirth has great affection for the Schulich School of Music,” says Sean Ferguson, Outgoing Dean of the School. “She loves music, she loves opera, but above all she loves our students!” That love has been expressed in many ways. It shows in her regular attendance at events at Pollack Hall and Tanna Schulich Hall; in years of participation on the School’s Advisory Board, where Wirth, BA’64, serves as the Chair; and in her support for the School’s opera and sound recording programs. Most recently, this passion prompted a magnificent gift of $7.5 million; this includes an endowment directed entirely toward supporting students through the creation of Student Excellence Awards, a Student Initiatives Fund, and the creation of the Wirth Vocal Prize.

The greater portion of the gift goes to creating Student Excellence Awards that the Schulich School of Music can use to recruit and retain the most talented students.

Recruiting students into a music school presents particular challenges. Unlike students in other areas in the university, the pedagogical experience of students in performance depends on the excellence of their fellow musicians.

“If you are an outstanding flute student playing in an ensemble, and a passage of music has you doubling the oboe, and that player is not also very strong, then you are not learning what you need to know to prepare you for success after you graduate,” says Ferguson. “Recruiting music students is almost like recruiting athletes for a sports team. Just as a football team needs all positions to be strong – quarterback, receiver, linebacker, et cetera – an orchestra needs excellent students in all instruments – strings, brass, percussion, etc. It is critical for us to have flexibility to recruit the very best musicians in all sections of the orchestra.” In other words, it’s crucial not just to have good musicians, but good musicians in each “position” on the team.

Most years the School receives many applications from flutists, violinists, pianists, and sopranos – but there is great competition among the top schools for outstanding students in other areas, such as oboe, bassoon, or tenors. “And this is one of the things we can do with Liz Wirth’s support,” says Ferguson. “We can target recruitment in key areas to ensure that everyone gets the learning experience they need. It’s a tremendous benefit to the School and to our students.”

The second component of Wirth’s gift, the Student Initiatives Fund, will directly benefit students. “Let’s say a student had been accepted to attend a summer course abroad, and may even have received a scholarship to cover course tuition but remains short of travel and accommodation funds,” says Ferguson. “We would assess the circumstance: is this an excellent student? Is this a worthwhile course? And if the answers are ‘Yes,’ the Student Initiatives Fund allows us to offer support to help this student.”

Or, a student or ensemble makes it to the finals of a big competition, but needs money to attend/travel. “We want to be in a position to be able to support those students and enrich their education,” says Ferguson. “And thanks to this gift, we will be.”

The newly created Wirth Vocal Prize, worth $25,000, will be awarded annually by a jury to the winner of a competition among singers from the School’s voice program. The finalists in the inaugural competition performed in February 2016, with the prize going to soprano Chelsea Rus, a graduating Master’s student (see article on page 8).

As an expression of gratitude not only for her most recent gift but also for her steadfast giving to the School, and her inexhaustible energy in supporting the School as a member of the Advisory Board and in other endeavours, this past fall the School named the new music building the Elizabeth Wirth Music Building.

The building, which opened in 2005, features the world-class Music Multimedia Room and its adjoining Control Room (which, thanks to Wirth’s leadership, was recently funded), the Wirth Opera Studio, the 200-seat Tanna Schulich Hall, research labs, recording studios and the Marvin Duchow Music Library. “There couldn’t be a better person to honour in this way,” says Ferguson. “The naming of the Elizabeth Wirth Music Building was one of the most rewarding moments of my time as dean.”
ELIZABETH WIRTH: A PORTRAIT OF GENEROSITY

Wirth’s commitment to the School is all-encompassing. She is a regular audience member at performances by the McGill Symphony Orchestra, Opera McGill, and numerous ensembles and soloists. She has offered valuable counsel on strategic, operational and financial issues as a member the School’s Advisory Board since 2002, and has served as the Board’s Chair since 2008.

In 2005, she and her late father Manfred Wirth provided funds to create the Wirth Opera Studio. “Any major opera company would love to have the Wirth Opera Studio for its rehearsal space. It can accommodate a full cast of students on stage, along with everyone else – from the conductor and pianist to stage directors and managers – involved in producing a piece,” says Patrick Hansen, Director of Opera McGill. “Elizabeth Wirth doesn’t only give money; she comes to shows, meets...
Our students are the best – amazingly talented yet unpretentious, hardworking and modest.

– Elizabeth Wirth

McGill Principal Suzanne Fortier puts the University’s appreciation in these terms: “I am grateful to Elizabeth Wirth for her years of impassioned and generous support to the Schulich School of Music of McGill University. These extraordinary gifts reflect her profound dedication to McGill and to its talented students. Ms. Wirth strongly believes in the importance of music to the cultural life of Montreal and Quebec. Her investment in music will enhance and enrich not just McGill University but the entire community for years to come.”

In 2013, Wirth established a matching fund and issued a challenge to donors to contribute to the completion of the Music Multimedia Room’s Control Room. Fifty-three donors participated and Wirth matched the contributions for a campaign total of $1.3 million. This initiative will allow students and faculty to conduct cutting-edge research and produce outstanding recordings; and the achievement was central to the School’s recent successful efforts to raise $17 million from funding agencies and private donors to complete the MMR itself (see sidebar).

“We are so fortunate to benefit from the unwavering support of generous donors like Elizabeth Wirth,” says Sean Ferguson. “It is through their generosity that we are able to attract students to Montreal from all over the world and offer them an unparalleled music education.”

Marcelo Wanderley, former director of CIRMMT and principal investigator on the project that secured $11 million in funding from the CFI, commented on the impact of the grant. “With the completion of the MMR, Quebec will have an infrastructure that doesn’t exist anywhere else at this level, bringing together artists, engineers and scientists in a laboratory for performance and research.” The renovations to the MMR include equipping it with technologies to alter the space’s acoustic properties at the touch of a button and to provide virtual immersive environments. The MMR will be able to replicate the acoustics of an 18th century Viennese music hall or enable musicians to perform in real time with an ensemble in another venue across the city – or beyond.

Marc Weinstein, McGill’s Vice-Principal, University Advancement, noted that “private philanthropy laid the groundwork for this successful grant application.” While individual donors were too numerous to mention, he singled out Joan Ivory, along with Elizabeth Wirth, whose matching fund for completing the MMR’s Control Room had previously raised $1.3 million, as particularly influential in raising funds to support the project. “These philanthropic gifts provided the anchor for public funding,” he said.

the students and follows what is happening. She’s a very special lady.”

McGill Principal Suzanne Fortier puts the University’s appreciation in these terms: “I am grateful to Elizabeth Wirth for her years of impassioned and generous support to the Schulich School of Music of McGill University. These extraordinary gifts reflect her profound dedication to McGill and to its talented students. Ms. Wirth strongly believes in the importance of music to the cultural life of Montreal and Quebec. Her investment in music will enhance and enrich not just McGill University but the entire community for years to come.”
Chelsea Rus was a singer for many years before she realized it could be a career choice. She began playing piano at four, singing as she played; a decade later, she took jazz piano lessons and spent her teen years playing in restaurants around her hometown of Abbotsford, B.C. “But when it came time to decide what I wanted to do as a career, I was wary of music,” she says. “You hear that it’s not a stable life, and I was very interested in law.”

But on an impulse she enrolled in a voice and piano program at nearby Kwantlen Polytechnic University. “My voice teacher there helped me discover this instrument I had no idea I had access to!” she says. And so Rus began to explore a new repertoire, starting with lieder and art song. “There is something compelling about sitting in a hall and hearing someone share their voice with you, without any barriers,” she says. “And when I saw my first operas, La Traviata and The Marriage of Figaro, I was overwhelmed. I fell in love with the characters.”

Rus continued undergraduate studies in UBC’s opera program, and upon graduation won the 2014 Johann Strauss Foundation Competition, which sent her to Salzburg, Austria, for summer studies at the Mozarteum, before she arrived at McGill to pursue her Master’s degree. “I was really drawn to McGill’s program after seeing Opera McGill’s production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and by the quality of the faculty members,” she says.

By now, of course, there are no doubts about Rus’s ability to make a career out of song. On February 7, 2016, she was one of four singers – along with countertenor Nicholas Burns, baritone Bruno Roy, and fellow soprano Lauren Woods – who took to the Tanna Schulich Hall stage for 30 minutes each; at the end of the evening, Rus was declared the winner of the first Wirth Vocal Prize.

The Prize is a fitting cap to Rus’s Master’s studies, which has seen her excel in Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi, John Blow’s Venus and Adonis, Mark Adamo’s Little Women and Donizetti’s L’Elisir d’amore. “I love my roles for different reasons,” she says. “I felt Beth in Little Women was very human and true to the character I imagined when reading Louisa May Alcott’s novel. And Adina in L’Elisir d’amore is a smart, strong female character; normally operas from the early 19th century have hopelessly girly romantic characters in love with the tenor, but she starts by believing you should change lovers every day, and I loved that. It was so fun!”

After graduating in May, Rus spent the first part of her summer in the Banff Centre’s opera program preparing to perform Benjamin Britten’s Rape of Lucretia, which will visit Toronto after its Banff debut. In September she begins a young artist residency with Opéra de Montréal’s Atelier Lyrique. “It will be my first professional engagement so I’m planning on learning a lot,” she says.

Apart from the confidence boost the Wirth Prize brings, Rus adds that the funding will come in very handy, too. “The money will be like a start-up fund to further my career, paying for things like travel expenses for auditions, coaching sessions, and everything else that goes into building a life as a singer.”

When I saw my first operas, La Traviata and The Marriage of Figaro, I was overwhelmed. I fell in love with the characters.

– Chelsea Rus
Taking Toronto by Storm

On November 17, 2015, the McGill Symphony Orchestra performed for the first time in Toronto, taking the stage at the prestigious Koerner Hall before nearly 1,000 enthusiastic attendees. The evening, which celebrated 10 years since the renaming of the Schulich School of Music, featured works by Brahms, Shostakovich and Rea.
Total student population: 876

- Undergraduate: 566
  - Quebec: 22%
  - Rest of Canada: 36%
  - International: 42%

- Graduate: 310

Native language:
- English: 70%
- French: 13%
- Other: 17%

Outstanding Programs/Exceptional Faculty:
The 2016 QS World University Rankings by Subject named the School the No.1 Canadian school in the Performing Arts Category.

- Schulich faculty members are full-time performing members of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal: 20
- Schulich faculty members were inducted into the Royal Society of Canada (Profs. William Caplin and Philippe Leroux) in 2015-16: 2

Research at Schulich:
- School of Music professors are currently receiving support from 56 federal and provincial grants.
- School of Music faculty include:
  - Tier One Canada Research Chair: 1
  - James McGill Scholars: 3
  - William Dawson Scholars: 3
ACCOMPLISHED ALUMNI

In the last five years, Schulich alums have won positions in over 20 international orchestras, including:

New York Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris and China’s National Performing Arts Center Orchestra.

In the last five years, Opera McGill alumni have performed on stages such as:

Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Bayerische Staatsopera, Opernhaus Zürich, Glyndebourne Opera Festival and Salzburg Festival.

MAKING MUSIC

The 2015-16 Schulich concert season included over 700 performances.

Opera McGill is the only opera training program in Canada to annually produce 3 fully-staged operas, each with orchestral accompaniment.

WORLD-CLASS FACILITIES

The School of Music occupies 148,650 square feet of space. This includes:

113 practice rooms
13 classrooms
10 ensemble rooms
4 concert halls
- Clara Lichtenstein Hall
- Pollack Hall
- Redpath Hall
- Tanna Schulich Hall

- A state-of-the-art Music Multimedia Room
- The Wirth Opera Studio
- The Marvin Duchow Music Library
- The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology
- Three recording studios

DONOR SUPPORT

In the past 10 years, scholarships, fellowships and bursaries offered to students have increased by over 400%.

In 2015-16, 145 undergraduates and 207 graduate students received over $4M in private and public financial support.
Competition Brings Young Talent to the Public

This is a fantastic opportunity for students to be visible to the greater Montreal community and establish connections with presenters.

- Ilya Poletaev, coordinator of the McGill Concerto Competition

The McGill Concerto Competition gives students a fantastic opportunity to work toward very exciting goals,” says Ilya Poletaev, who coordinates the event. It is, in fact, three different competitions: the classical concerto portion, which focuses on works written between 1750 and 1800 for any instrument; the piano concerto competition, for works written after 1800; and the brass, woodwinds, and percussion concerto competition, also for post-1800 compositions. The winner of each section has the opportunity to perform as a soloist with the McGill Symphony Orchestra in addition to receiving the Peter White and Mary Feher Award.

“We’re very fortunate,” says Poletaev. “Not only do we have Mary Feher’s support, so we can offer a scholarship to each of the winners, but we also have partnerships with Chapelle Historique du Bon-Pasteur and with Jeunesses Musicales Canada.” Representatives of both attend each of the finals and take one person from among all the finalists – not necessarily the winner – to present in their respective series.

“So this is a fantastic opportunity for students to be visible to the greater Montreal community and to establish connections with presenters,” says Poletaev. “And even for those who do not win, the opportunity to perform in the competitions’ finals, in public, with accompaniment, is really energizing.”

And Mary Feher is delighted to be able to help. “My late husband loved music, as do I, although neither of us had the talent to advance in it. But having musicians who can offer us wonderful music is very important,” says Feher. “And that little bit of extra money really can help students develop their careers.”

Playing with an orchestra always provides an extra push to develop your art further.

– Anna Peletsis, winner of the McGill Piano Concerto Competition
Zhenni Li
Winner, Classical Concerto Competition

Zhenni Li’s performance of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 2 – a piece she describes as “at the border of classical and romantic music” – won first place in the 2015-16 Classical Concerto Competition.

Li, a doctoral student working with professor Stéphane Lemelin, was born in a remote part of China with little exposure to classical music. “The first time I heard a piano I was around six,” she recalls. “I was entranced: I really wanted to play the instrument that created that beautiful sound.” Now in her second year of doctoral studies, Li is a two-time Concerto Competition winner: last year she won the Piano Concerto Competition with Rachmaninoff’s Concerto No. 3, which she performed this year with the McGill Symphony Orchestra.

“Having the opportunity to play this piece by Beethoven with an orchestra is very exciting, and winning the Peter White and Mary Feher Award means I have been able to apply to competitions and go to auditions,” says Li. “I’ve had the freedom to do the things I need to do to further my career.”

Brent Proseus
Winner, Woodwinds, Brass and Percussion Concerto Competition

When trumpet professor Richard Stoelzel joined McGill this past year, he brought with him some of his students at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, including first-year student Brent Proseus. “I’m a bit of a homebody and I didn’t know much about Montreal, so coming to university here instead of GVSU, where I had originally been accepted, was a huge change for me,” he says. “But all has been going well.”

Very well, in fact, as Proseus took first place in the Woodwinds, Brass and Percussion Concerto Competition in February 2016. Although an undergraduate, Proseus boasts an impressive performance CV, having performed at Carnegie Hall and toured China with the U.S. National Youth Orchestra, led by former Orchestre symphonique de Montréal conductor Charles Dutoit.

“Thanks to the McGill Concerto Competition I have a sense of where I stand,” he says. “It’s a reminder that I have an opportunity to consider a career as a soloist.”

Anna Peletsis
Winner, Piano Concerto Competition

“Playing with an orchestra always provides an extra push to develop your art further, as working in a rehearsal with an orchestra and a maestro is very enriching,” says Moscow-born pianist Anna Peletsis, winner of the Piano Concerto Competition. “And I’m an international student, so winning the Peter White and Mary Feher Award helps a lot! You have to earn a living, and it is challenging to find balance between working to pay rent and practicing your instrument.”

Peletsis came to McGill after completing her Master’s degree at the Royal College of Music in London, England. “The Schulich School of Music is renowned, and I heard wonderful things from other people about their experiences here.”

At McGill she is completing her doctoral studies with professor Marina Mdivani. “She is wonderful to work with, and was responsible as much as me for my winning the competition,” says Peletsis, who is now also looking forward to working with MGSO Maestro Alex Hauser. “Maestro Hauser is a wonderful artist and educator, and professor, so I feel very privileged and I’m sure performing with the MGSO will be an important learning experience for me” she says.
Lou Williamson met Chris and Eve Millington when he and Chris were musicians in the Canadian military – Lou on drums, Chris on saxophone. “Lou was stationed in Montreal, and while there he taught at McGill, creating a syllabus for drum set playing,” says Chris. When Lou was transferred to Millington’s home base of Victoria, B.C., the two began a 20-year friendship and musical partnership, performing in ensembles such as the Chris Millington Big Band, touring and recording together.

“I was being hired to produce all sorts of work outside the military, from Broadway shows to jingles, and Lou was always my first call,” says Chris, who with Eve runs Sea Mill Productions.

When Lou was being treated for terminal cancer, he asked the Millingtons to arrange for funding to support young drummers. “He was determined to leave a legacy,” says Eve. “Lou taught a lot of students, not only at McGill but as a freelance musician. He loved teaching and sharing his knowledge with them.”

The Millingtons honoured their friend’s request by creating the Lou Williamson Jazz Award in jazz drumming at the Schulich School of Music. “McGill is the natural place to set up this award because of Lou’s history there,” says Chris. “The legacy will outlive us,” Eve adds. (To see Lou Williamson in one of his final – and impressively energetic – appearances behind the drum kit, search for the Chris Millington Big Band’s performance of “Sing Sing Sing” on YouTube.)

John Buck is the inaugural winner of the Award. “I was always interested in playing drums, and it was the first instrument I learned,” Buck says. “A lot of people start with piano or violin, but my parents were pretty brave and supportive in letting me go straight to drums. I was in my early teens, and like a lot of drummers I started by playing rock.”

Eventually Buck made the move to jazz, and later the move from his hometown of Calgary to Montreal, drawn to McGill in part because of family history – his father’s family is from Verdun – but also because of the School’s stellar drum faculty. “In Canada it’s hard to find a drum faculty that compares,” he says. “The School has five or six teachers who are world-class drummers, and that’s pretty special.”

“I was overjoyed to win the Williamson Jazz Award. The financial aid will be a big help,” says Buck. “But what makes this award so special is that Lou was a jazz drummer, and for him to have donated so much of his estate to provide scholarships for young drummers... it’s pretty cool.”
Knock knock.
Who’s there?
Tuba.
Tuba who?

It’s no joke – I’ve come for the tuba!
Lisa Lorenzino, Chair of the Music Education Area, recounts that it was fairly common for her to be teaching a class in instrumental techniques when a knock on the door would herald a student from another class coming to borrow the area’s only tuba. But no longer will her class – or anyone else’s – experience such interruptions. After a successful “McGill24” one-day fundraising campaign, the Music Education Area has been able to purchase $20,000 worth of much-needed new musical equipment – including a new tuba.

Music education students take a series of technique courses covering a variety of instruments – in a woodwinds course they will learn to play flute, oboe, clarinet and saxophone, for instance. The demand for instruments is therefore high. These courses have many of students and some are offered every semester; as well, at the end of each semester students put on a concert on the main stage of Pollack Hall. So the instruments are always being used.

“But we haven’t rejuvenated them in decades, and some are at the point where they’re no longer even worth repairing; they’re basically ready for the garbage,” says Lorenzino. “So when we found we were going to be the beneficiaries of the Schulich School of Music’s McGill24 effort and would be getting all these new instruments, we were absolutely thrilled.”

“The McGill24 fundraising was great,” enthuses Heather Worling, a member of the Music Education Undergraduate Student Association (MEduSA) who helped spearhead the drive. MEdUSA filmed and posted several videos outlining the need for support and led a successful social media campaign.

The effort also benefitted from a matching donation from longstanding supporter Joan Ivory, BA’54. Ivory became the driving force behind the Schulich School of Music’s instrument bank project several years ago when she learned that the McGill Symphony Orchestra simply could not play certain pieces of music because they didn’t have the instruments needed. Ivory created a fund to purchase much-needed instruments, and then found other donors to kick into the fund as well. “Students should have the opportunity to play anything they could technically play, and shouldn’t be held back because of a lack of instruments,” says Ivory, a member of the School’s Advisory Board since 1998.

That credo applies for Music Education students as well, so when the shipment of new instruments arrived on campus in April, Worling and Lorenzino were on hand to inspect the goods. “We haven’t had a chance to play them yet, but the instruments were fun to unwrap and great to look at,” says Worling.

The famed tuba was not in the first shipment of instruments. But, Worling says, “When it does arrive, you can be sure we’ll be posting it on MEdUSA’s Facebook page.”
Vincent Lauzer: Not Your Typical Soloist’s Career

“I don’t know exactly what attracted me to the recorder when I began playing it at age five, but I really like the pure sound that it makes,” Vincent Lauzer, BMus’10, MMus’12, says. “It’s a woodwind with no special reeds or anything: You just blow into it, so you’re really close to your instrument.” And while the recorder is often relegated to the role of “starter” instrument, for Lauzer its appeal has never diminished. “Once I started, I never stopped.”

Quite the opposite, as his career has accelerated in recent years and he currently averages between 65 and 80 concerts annually. “I’m very busy, but that’s what I like,” says Lauzer. “I have a special love for early Italian music,” he says, and his well received 2014 CD on the ATMA Classique label, Passagi, expresses his passion for Italian pieces for the recorder from the 16th and 17th centuries; one reviewer hailed his ability “to play elaborate Italian baroque solos as exciting as a star violinist’s.”

But while the recorder is generally considered an “early music” instrument, Lauzer is also immersing himself in contemporary works. “I really enjoy playing new works, some of which are very theatrical,” he says. “So I’m trying to create a path for myself in the contemporary music world as a soloist.” Lauzer has commissioned several works and at this June’s Montreal Baroque Festival performed a solo concert of four pieces written for him.

Lauzer’s virtuosity has been acknowledged regularly: In 2012, shortly after completing his graduate degree, he was named breakthrough artist of the year at the Opus Awards and also won the prestigious Stepping Stone portion of the Canadian Music Competition; in 2013-14 he was named the “Révélation Radio-Canada” (up-and-coming young musician) of the year. Most notably, this year he won the $50,000 Fernand-Lindsay Career Award, given by Fondation Père Lindsay to support young musicians in developing an international career.

“I’ve had the opportunity to play across Canada, the U.S., Mexico, and Europe but to do so more regularly is one of my goals,” he says. Part of his plan includes working with Swiss musician Maurice Steger, who has been called “the world’s leading recorder player” and “the Paganini of the recorder.” “It’s rare to have a solo career with the recorder, and Steger has succeeded better than anyone at doing that in the last few years,” says Lauzer. “Right now I’m doing everything I can to prepare for an international career.”

In Canada, Lauzer is building an impressive profile in baroque and early music. This past year he was named the new Artistic Director of the Lamèque International Baroque Music Festival, one of Canada’s most established and venerable early music festivals, based in the village of Lamèque, New Brunswick. He also performs regularly with ensembles he co-founded, especially Flûte Alors, Canada’s only recorder quartet, as well as Les Songes and Recordare, and is frequently hired by other ensembles for their projects. He also teaches in several venues.

Lauzer chose to develop his talent at the Schulich School, where he studied with Matthias Maute, because of the School’s vibrant early music community. “As musicians, we’re always looking for people to work with, so a big part of my decision was based on being able to find a lot of colleagues at McGill, and it was a great experience,” he says. “I made a lot of good friends who I’m still working with.”

While at McGill, Lauzer was also the beneficiary of donor support: he was assisted by the Gian Lyman Memorial Fellowship, the McConnell Award, the Grace Evelyn Tuttle Scholarship and the Phyllis and Bernard Shapiro Scholarship in Instrumental Performance.
“As musicians, we’re always looking for people to work with. I made a lot of good friends at McGill who I’m still working with.”

– Vincent Lauzer, BMus’10, MMus’12
Honouring a Young Musician Gone Too Soon

For a young composer, a commission to write a substantial orchestral piece is amazing.

– Moe Touizrar, winner of the Andrew Svoboda Memorial Prize in Orchestral Composition

Moe Touizrar, MMus’12 and current PhD student, has a flourishing composing career, and now Joseph and Lewina Svoboda are ensuring that the momentum keeps going.

Touizrar has seen a number of his compositions premiered in recent years, including a piece for 15 instruments performed in February by McGill’s Contemporary Music Ensemble and another for five instruments premiered at the Orford International Music Academy.

This spring, he won the Andrew Svoboda Memorial Prize in Orchestral Composition. The Prize was created by the Svobodas in memory of their late son, Andrew Svoboda, BMus’00, MA (Composition)’04, who was a very promising young composer.

Prior to his untimely passing, Andrew Svoboda had already received composing commissions from Radio France and the Dunkirk-based classical quartet Quat’Nord, and had had his work performed by the Radio France Philharmonic and the Hamilton (Ontario) Philharmonic Orchestra.

The new annual award – valued at $5,000 – provides funding for a student to create an orchestral composition to be performed by the McGill Symphony Orchestra.

“For a young composer, a commission to write a substantial orchestral piece is amazing,” says Touizrar, who is also carrying out research examining the link between musical orchestration and listeners’ emotions. “Writing a piece for 60 musicians is a wonderful opportunity for me as a composer and researcher to test some of my theories.”

From left, Lewina Svoboda and Joseph Svoboda, who created the Andrew Svoboda Prize to honour their son (pictured below), prize winner Moe Touizrar, and outgoing Dean of Music Sean Ferguson.
Professor Julie Cumming has been named the Schulich School of Music’s interim Dean starting July 1, 2016 and continuing until May 31, 2017. “I’m interested in reinforcing connections with the student body and celebrating the achievements of faculty members,” she says. “And of course I want to build on Sean [Ferguson]’s successes, so a big part of my job will involve supporting and overseeing the many construction and renovation projects that are about to get underway.”

Happily, Professor Cumming is especially familiar with many of these projects: she helped write the successful Canada Foundation for Innovation grant application to complete the Music Multimedia Room, and was also involved in acquiring funds to equip an ensemble classroom with high-end video-conferencing technology that will enable McGill students and professors to work with their peers in Europe and the U.S.

A musicologist who specializes in late medieval and Renaissance music, Cumming led a team including collaborators from the U.S. and the U.K. on the first large data-driven project on musical style. The project is called the Electronic Locator of Vertical Interval Successions, but is better known by its acronym, ELVIS. She is currently the co-leader of another major project, SIMSSA: Single Interface for Music Score Searching and Analysis, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and is co-investigator on a number of other notable projects with collaborators across the University.

Cumming has also earned two major teaching awards, the Schulich School of Music Teaching Award and the David Thompson Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Supervision.

Cumming’s vast experience in the Schulich School of Music also includes having served as the Director of Graduate Studies and, for the past five years, as Associate Dean, Research and Administration – positions that have given her a high profile across McGill and make her particularly well-suited to steer the School over the coming year.
Since 1821, McGill has been offering outstanding educational opportunities to students from across the globe, pioneering new areas of research and discovery, and changing how we understand the world. As we approach our University’s 200th anniversary, McGill’s professors, researchers and students continue to tackle the biggest questions in science, culture and human endeavour.

Looking towards McGill’s third century, we hope you will join with us in celebrating and supporting this important work as we embark on The Road To 200 and beyond, and as, together, we create an even better world and a brighter future.

Schulich School of Music
Strathcona Music Building
555 Sherbrooke St. W.
Montreal, QC H3A 1E3
T 514-398-4535
donations.music@mcgill.ca

Produced by University Advancement