

Creative Learning Creative Giving



University
of Victoria
Fine Arts



Fiona in an applied theatre performance at UVic's Diversity Research Forum in 2015

Discovering the Power of Theatre

Student Fiona Donnelly-Rheaume uses theatre to help & heal

As the last act wrapped, Fiona Donnelly-Rheaume looked around the great hall of UVic's First Peoples House with tears in her eyes. "I still get choked up thinking about it," she says. "Elder Vic Underwood, a residential school survivor, addressed the settler children as if no one was in the room and thanked them for caring."

As the final project in her theatre degree with an applied theatre focus, Fiona—under the mentorship of Education's Phil Duchene—worked with Royal Oak Middle School students to perform the play *No Stepping Back* during UVic's 2018 IdeaFest.

Written by Duchene and Theatre professor Warwick Dobson, *No Stepping Back* addresses the complex history of residential

schools and their catastrophic effects on Indigenous communities, families and individuals. "Theatre is a powerful tool that can bring about social change and help to build a stronger community," says Fiona.

As a young military wife and mother, Fiona joined theatre groups in every town where her family was transferred. "It helped me learn to adapt to change and express my feelings," she explains. "And the people I worked with became like my extended family—people I could lean on."

It was that experience that led Fiona to UVic to study theatre at the age of 48. "Despite being older than my peers, I immediately found my place in the theatre department. It seemed everyone shared my belief that theatre could

help heal people and communities."

Her passion and hard work on projects like *No Stepping Back* didn't go unnoticed; her professors nominated her for the Muriel Conway Memorial Scholarship. "I was sitting in a coffee shop when I received the email," Fiona recalls. "It was like a scene in a television show: my knees buckled, and I was overcome with shock and happiness."

Fiona's decision to pursue her degree meant she would have to live separately from her daughter and husband, who was still in the military and stationed in Yellowknife. "Receiving donor support not only took some pressure off my family financially but it meant someone saw promise in me and I can only hope to live up to that promise." 🐦



Field school engages Rubinoff Sculpture Park

Fine Arts students continue to benefit from the ongoing cultural legacy of the late Jeffery Rubinoff. A pair of field trips this past year saw students visit Hornby Island's Jeffrey Rubinoff Sculpture Park (JRSP): a third-year sculpture class spent five days on retreat in November, while another dozen Writing and Art History students went in May as part of the unique interdisciplinary field course, "Art as a Sense of Place". "The session saw a lot of hard work by all and good learning by everybody," noted professor Daniel Laskarin in November.

A legacy in theatre

Translating a love for the arts into ongoing student support, Merv Porath (right, at our recent Donor Appreciation Dinner) established three new scholarships in memory of his wife. The Dr. Marion Porath Legacy Scholarships will assist undergraduates with outstanding ability in the areas of theatre production/management, costume design/construction and performance. A former teacher in Mission BC, Marion was very creative and artistic, and encouraged these traits in her classroom. Her legacy will now live on with our students.



Voice students Kyla Fradette (left), Chelsea Kutyn & Ali Horton backstage at the Royal Theatre before a production of POV's *Countess Maritza* in April

Voice program develops talent

The next time you go to Pacific Opera Victoria, take a close look at the program—you'll likely find our students among the chorus: we had students in three mainstage productions this past year. But as well as this valuable experience, voice students also directly benefit from the Bea Scott Scholarships in Voice. Funded by donor Vic Scott in memory of his late wife, the Bea Scott Scholarships are presented to Music students whose principle instrument is voice. In 2018/19 alone, nine students received this award—and over 60 students have benefited since it was created in 2013.

Spirit of the Phoenix lives on in new award

The new Frances Theron Spirit of the Phoenix Award honours the memory of the young undergraduate who passed away at just 19 following a tragic accident in 2016. Nominated by the Theatre department, who supported the award's creation and funding alongside students, the inaugural recipient was Emma Leck. A performer, playwright and arts administrator, Leck also mounted her own show with Intrepid Theatre this year—while still maintaining an outstanding academic record.



Emma Leck (left) receives the Spirit of the Phoenix award from professor Peter McGuire in May; award namesake Frances Theron (right)



Nathan Medd named Distinguished Alumni

While he has built his career behind the scenes, Theatre alumnus Nathan Medd is now in the spotlight. Formerly of the National Arts Centre, Medd became the Managing Director of Performing Arts for the Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity in 2018, and received the 2019 Fine Arts Distinguished Alumni Award from Dean Susan Lewis. “The great value of a fine arts education is gaining the tools of self-expression, self-examination and group process,” he says. “Those skills serve every possible direction you could take in your career.”

Support growing for film studies

Thanks to a new annual donation from the estate of Dorothy May Kelly through the Victoria Foundation, Fine Arts can continue to support original student filmmaking. This new gift will help students create their own short films during their studies; since 2009, students in the Writing department have made seven stand-alone short films as well as a 10-episode web series (*Freshman’s Wharf*, right), which have been screened and honoured at a number of off-campus film festivals and industry award programs.



New award named for Victoria College alum

Avis Rasmussen received a surprise birthday gift this year: an endowed UVic scholarship. The Avis Rasmussen Award will be given to a mature graduate student studying visual arts. Avis first attended Victoria College, earning a teaching certificate in 1957; she then completed a Bachelor’s in Education in 1975, followed by her Visual Arts BFA in 1979; and finally a Master’s in Education in 1982. “This award has allowed me to create a legacy of helping other artists pursue their dreams,” she says. “There is no better feeling than that.”

“It is a great honour to receive this scholarship, and I am very appreciative. Thank you so much for your kindness and generosity.”

—Erin, fourth year, Art History & Visual Studies

Student Voices

“This award is a primary reason that I am able to continue my studies at UVic, as I would otherwise not be financially able to manage. Thank you for making this award possible.”

—Desiree, third year, School of Music

“Because of people like you, I am still doing what I love doing most—which leads me to believe the work I create is truly important.”

—Cassia, third year, Visual Arts

“It is such a relief to be given the privilege of studying . . . without the accompanying financial stresses.”

—Elisa, third year, Theatre

Building Connections

Fine Arts donor dinner a big success

The room was full, conversations were flowing and plenty of connections were being made when over 70 people—including Dennis and Barbara Latham, seen here with Music student Jason Gordon—attended the first Fine Arts Donor Appreciation Dinner at the University Club in April.



“It takes a great many people to ensure our students are successful,” noted Dean Susan Lewis at the event. “It is truly inspiring to both faculty and students alike to see the community share their wealth and directly support student awards and scholarships.”

With over 200 awards funded by our donors—many of which are given to more than one student—there have been hundreds of students who have benefited over the years. The impact of these gifts linger long after graduation, and directly influences student lives.

“It is the proverbial ‘ripple in the pond’ effect,” said Dean Lewis. “Your gifts continue to grow and expand as the student takes their education out into the world. And that is an amazing legacy indeed.”

Making a Difference with DEAC

Donors and alumni shape the future

Looking to expand the reach of Fine Arts beyond the campus and into the community, Dean Susan Lewis established the Dean’s External Advisory Committee in 2018. The DEAC meets twice yearly to assist with the implementation of our Strategic Plan and UVic’s Strategic Framework, as well as increasing the Faculty’s local, national and global reach and profile.

“In 2018/19, DEAC focused efforts on strengthening the Faculty’s ties to the local arts community,” says Dean Susan Lewis. “This has led to new opportunities for student learning, closer links between the Faculty and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and a real-world perspective brought to bear on the Faculty’s educational and creative mission.”

With the 50th anniversary of Fine Arts coming in 2020, the DEAC will be hosting a gathering celebrating



our ongoing achievements.

Current DEAC membership:

- Lynda Gammon, Visual Arts professor emeritus
- Philomena Hanson, Victoria Arts Marketing
- Eric Jordan*, Codename Entertainment
- Glynis Leyshon*, theatrical director
- Colin Plant*, Saanich Councillor
- Alison Ross*, Kilshaws Auctions
- Haema Sivanesan, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
- Tobin Stokes*, composer
- Michael Whitfield*, theatrical designer.

* Fine Arts alumni



\$1.8M

Donated to
Fine Arts
in 2018/19

We are so grateful to our donors who established new awards this year and expanded the range of opportunities available to our students:

- Kathleen G. Collis Art Therapy Scholarship
- Roger J. Bishop Writing Prize
- Frances Theron Spirit of the Phoenix Award
- Eric LeBlanc Memorial Scholarship (Music)
- Terry and Myrna Daniels Scholarship in Music
- Butterfield Scholarship in Fine Arts
- Butterfield Scholarship in School of Music
- Ailsa & Roger Bishop Entrance Scholarship (Theatre)
- Ailsa & Roger Bishop Travel Award (Music)
- Dr. Marion Porath Legacy Scholarships (Theatre)
- Herbert Bertram Falkenstein Graduate Scholarship in Fine Arts



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New Fine Arts
awards created
in 2018/19

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To learn more about our giving
initiatives, please contact our
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