

Dear Dr. Avis,

The 2021-22 academic year was an historic one for The Royal Conservatory School, with the renaming to the Oscar Peterson School of Music in honour of the legendary jazz pianist, beloved alumnus and RCM Honorary Fellow.

Your support over the last year has been invaluable as we continue to fulfill our mandate of providing music education for children and adults in our community. Thank you for your generosity and for your belief in the importance of music education.

In the spring, we announced the new Oscar Peterson Program, offering tuition-free, high quality music instruction to underserved youth across the GTA. Under the artistic direction of Colin Clarke, the founder and Artistic Director of the Toronto Youth Wind Orchestra, the program supports a belief held by Dr. Peterson (and shared by the RCM) that music education should be available to everyone. The Oscar Peterson Program will begin classes this fall.

The major challenge of the year was navigating pandemic-related health restrictions in a way that allowed as many students as possible to continue to receive the highest quality instruction. Strategic changes were implemented at the beginning of the school year to allow in-person music classes to happen safely, and in line with all public health measures. Group classes were held with smaller numbers to allow for physical distancing, and hybrid options were made available so students could join lessons or classes remotely on a temporary basis so that they could continue their studies.

Because of a cautious and pragmatic approach to health restrictions, the school was able to resume regular activity in March, and our March break camps were offered once again. Performances could also resume, and from March through June we had over 500 students participate in solo recitals at the RCM.

The year culminated with our annual PLAY Day event on Sunday June 5th – a full day of student performances and musical activities which is open to the public. The event included three concerts featuring the school's orchestras, bands, and choirs. Over 800 people attended these concerts. The highlight was the performance of Carnival of the Animals with the four Oscar Peterson School orchestras performing the famous Saint-Saëns work together on the stage of Koerner Hall.

Other highlights included performances in the RCM's Reta Lila Weston Music Court by our adult samba group and an adult jazz combo that delighted audiences throughout the afternoon. The day ended with a lively Celtic, pub-style fiddling jam session that included students and faculty.

During the student and family reception, we heard from many appreciative students and parents about how much they enjoyed and looked forward to performance opportunities and making music together for an audience. Consequently, next year we are planning additional recital dates and special master classes and workshops to give students even more opportunities to perform and learn.

Once again, on behalf of The Oscar Peterson School of Music, our parents, students and teachers, thank you for your vital support.

Sincerely,

**Jeremy Trupp**

Dean, The Oscar Peterson School of Music