



vsNEW – Victoria Symphony New Explorations Workshops 2025-26

vsNEW is an innovative program in which young students can explore and experiment with composition and write new works for a small ensemble of dedicated Victoria Symphony Musicians. 2025-26 is the 20th year vsNEW has been a part of the VS Education programs.

This year vsNEW is led by Composer-Mentor Taylor Brook and an ensemble of VS musicians. The sessions take place on most Wednesday evenings 6.30-8pm from September through March during school term. These sessions include meetings with an ensemble of musicians where composers bring their pieces in various stages of completion to be read through by the musicians, which is followed by discussion. From the most basic to the most complex, many musical issues arise and it is a great learning experience for everyone. There are also monthly seminars and private lessons with the Composer-Mentor. Private lesson times will be arranged after the first meeting. This season's program will be a collaboration with the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and the students are invited to choose a piece of artwork from the gallery to use as inspiration for their composition. The program culminates in a final performance at the Art Gallery on April 11th. There are no fees to participate.

The Program is unique and only one of its kind in Canada. The Victoria Symphony is proud of this program's success and many young composers have won local, provincial and even national awards through it.

Requirements for student participation:

1. Age range 11-18 (Middle School to High School)
2. Some prior composing experience. This can be a song, a solo instrument work, or a piece with multiple instruments.
3. The ability to properly notate Western staff notation and have experience writing your own music. The musicians will be reading directly from the students' scores/ parts. Students will be expected to provide pdfs of parts and scores approximately one week prior to each workshop with musicians.
4. Participation at all workshops is expected, except in the case of emergencies or sickness. Any foreseeable absences due to other commitments need to be discussed and approved well in advance.

September 17th application deadline. Applicants will be contacted on September 20th.



vsNEW 2025-26 DATES AND TIMES:

Please note dates are subject to change.

Venue: Social Suite at First Metropolitan Church, 932 Balmoral Rd, unless otherwise specified.

Wedn Sept 24 6.30-8pm	First meeting: Introduction to instruments
Wedn Oct 1 6.30-8pm	Introduction to percussion, venue tbd
Thu Oct 9 4.30-5.30pm	Tour at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
Wed Oct 15 6.30-8pm	Seminar
Wed Oct 22 5-8pm	Private lessons, 30mins each
Wed Oct 29 6.30-8pm	First reading of compositions, UVic Music Building
Sat Nov 8 10am-12.30pm	Attending VS Dress Rehearsal at Farquhar, UVic
Wed Nov 12 6.30-8pm	Seminar
Wed Nov 19 5-8pm	Private lessons, 30mins each
Wed Dec 3 6.30-8pm	Second reading of compositions, UVic Music Building
Wed Jan 7 6.30-8pm	Seminar
Wed Jan 14 5-8pm	Private lessons: 30mins each
Wed Jan 21 6.30-8pm	Third reading of compositions, UVic Music Building
Wed Feb 4 6.30-8pm	Seminar
Wed Feb 18 5-8pm	Private lessons: 30mins each
Sat Feb 28 10am-12.30pm	Attending VS Dress Rehearsal at Farquhar, UVic
Wed March 4 6.30-8pm	Fourth reading of compositions, UVic Music Building
Wed March 11 5-8pm	Private lessons, 30mins each
Thu April 9 6-8.30pm	Dress rehearsal, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
Sat April 11 2.30pm	Final concert, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria



Application Form:

Please submit this completed application form, score(s) and audio recording(s) (if you have one) of 1 – 3 pieces you have composed by no later than September 17th 2025 11:59pm. Scores can be handwritten or written with notation software. Works do not have to be completed.

All application materials should be sent to soile@victoriasymphony.ca.

If you have any questions, please contact the program coordinator Soile Stratkauskas (250-412-1975) or soile@victoriasymphony.ca.

Full name: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Address: _____ **Postal Code:** _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Guardian's name: _____

Guardian's email: _____

Guardian's phone: _____

How long have you been composing for?: _____

What instrument(s) do you play?: _____

Name of School: _____

Teacher's name (music/instrument/or composition - please specify which):

Teacher's email: _____

Where did you hear about this program?: _____



Please tell us about your experience with music and composing, and why you wish to be part of this program. List compositions and festivals where applicable. (*max. 500 words, use separate sheet if necessary*)