



vsNEW – Victoria Symphony New Explorations Workshops 2026-27

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. 2026-27 is the 21st year vsNEW has been a part of the VS Education programs.

This year vsNEW is led by Composer-Mentor Christine Donkin and an ensemble of VS musicians. The sessions take place on most Saturday afternoons from September through April 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 the final performance at the Art Gallery on May 1st. 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 16th application deadline. Applicants will be contacted on September 18th.



vsNEW 2026-27 DATES AND TIMES:

Please note dates are subject to change.

Venue: Room 200 at United Commons, 932 Balmoral Rd, unless otherwise specified.

Sat Sep 26 th 2-3:30pm	First meeting: Introduction to instruments
Sat Oct 10 th 2-3:30pm	Tour at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
Sat Oct 17 th 2-3:30pm	Seminar
Sat Oct 24 th 1-4pm	Private lessons, 30mins each
Sat Nov 7 th 2-4pm	First reading of compositions
Sat Nov 14 th 2-3:30pm	Seminar
Sat Nov 21 st 10-12:30	Auditing VS Dress Rehearsal at United Commons 932 Balmoral
Sat Nov 28 th 1-4pm	Private lessons, 30mins each
Sat Dec 12 th 2-4pm	Second reading of compositions
Sat Jan 9 th 2-3:30pm	Seminar
Sat Jan 16 th 1-4pm	Private lessons
Sat Jan 30 th 2-4pm	Third reading of compositions
Sat Feb 6 th 2-3:30pm	Seminar
Sat Feb 20 th 1-4pm	Private lessons, 30mins each
Sat March 6 th 2-4pm	Fourth reading of compositions
Sat April 3 rd time tbc	Auditing Hugh Davidson Composer Readings, venue tbc
Sat April 10 th 1-4pm	Private lessons, 30mins each
Sat April 17 th 2-4:30pm	Auditing VS Dress Rehearsal at Farquhar Auditorium, UVic
Tue April 27 th 4-6:30pm	Dress rehearsal, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
Sat May 1 st 2pm	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 16th, 2026, 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*)