



## The “business” of music composition

**An introduction to Senior Faculty  
Fellow and Composer, Dorothy Chang**

**By: Yvonne Gillespie,  
Junior Fellow**



**Composer and Assistant Professor of  
Composition, Dorothy Chang**

How does a business major become a music composer? In the case of Dorothy Chang, Composer and Assistant Professor of Composition, UBC School of Music, it came down to a gift for musical improvisation and a wisely chosen elective in her first year of university.

Dorothy was born and raised in Naperville, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Her parents were both professionals in the telecommunications industry; neither was particularly musical. Despite this, Dorothy and her two sisters all learned to play the piano at a young age, and Dorothy learned to play the clarinet as well. She had little exposure to classical or contemporary music, but she

loved to improvise at the piano, playing with pitches and sounds. She wrote her first piece when she was only six years old.

Following high school, Dorothy set off to study business, not music, at the University of Michigan. Luckily, she enrolled in an Introduction to Composition for Non-Majors course. It proved to be just what she needed to introduce the possibility of a career in composition. Soon after, she transferred into the music composition program and began pursuing her passion full time.

At first Dorothy worried that her lack of prior training would be a disadvantage; most of her classmates had taken pre-college composition programs at schools like Juilliard, and had been writing and working with teachers for years. However, her talent and dedicated work ethic served her well. She completed a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Arts in Composition at the University of Michigan, and then a Doctorate in Composition at Indiana University.

After several years teaching a variety of music courses at Indiana State University, Dorothy was thrilled to earn a position teaching music composition at UBC. She moved to Vancouver

with her musician husband, fully aware of the challenges and rewards awaiting her. She knew it would be difficult to get connected in a new musical environment, especially in a large city with such an active arts scene, but she is delighted with the welcome and support she has received from local musicians and artists.

Dorothy's main teaching goal is to engage her students in the learning and creative process. In composition, she encourages students to challenge themselves to explore new directions, and tries to help each individual identify his or her musical goals. As a composition teacher, she strives to help her students develop the skills, knowledge, originality and direction they need to succeed in whatever areas they pursue.

Being a composer has definite advantages and challenges. There are often long stretches of isolation and hard work, interrupted by frenzied activity to ensure the completion of works for looming deadlines. Dorothy juggles teaching, students' needs, commission deadlines, and travel, not to mention her family life and recreation. Fortunately, this is balanced by greatly rewarding experiences: working with

*Continued on Page 3*





Principal Tim Brook

## Message from the Principal

*So much has happened at St. John's College since I arrived a year and a half ago, and so much is unfolding even as I write, that the idea of compressing everything into a few short paragraphs strikes me as an impossible task. Rather than report on all that is going on, let me step back from the details of College life and say something instead about the one aspect that continues to impress me more strongly than any other, the aspect that gives the College its unique quality, and that is its intercultural fabric.*

Two-thirds of the junior fellows who reside at the College have come to Canada from as many as forty countries around the world. They are at UBC to pursue an international education, but they are at St. John's for a slightly different reason. They have chosen to live not by themselves, nor just among Canadians for that matter, but with each other. They have come to the College because it gives them a place where it is possible to meet and learn from people they might otherwise never encounter: Lebanese talking with Israelis, Chinese with Tibetans, Guatemalans with Turks, and Canadians, of course, with everyone. The combinations among the fellows are endless, and endlessly eye-opening. Not every encounter is easy, but everyone grasps the importance of courtesy and the need to be sensitive to the fact that, although we do not all look at the world in the same way, we all look at the same world.

The intercultural life of Johanneans reminds me of my experience at the same stage in my own academic life. Upon

graduating from the University of Toronto, I went to Asia for two years. I spent most of those two years in China, taking courses in the language, literature, and history of that culture. More formative of my intellectual and cultural identity than the courses I took, however, were the day-to-day interactions I had with the people around me. Chinese were first among these, of course, though Chinese at that time had been trained in the fierce certainty of autonomy over the uncontrollable effects of contact with other cultures and were not always as approachable as they are now. Besides my Chinese classmates, there were students of many other nationalities in Beijing and Shanghai who had no such inhibitions. The contacts flowed in all directions, as did the surprises. I was the first Canadian most Chinese had ever met, but I was also the first Canadian that most Albanians, Cambodians, or Zambians had ever met. And they were the first for me as well. We were all changed by our discoveries of each other.

That exhilarating learning experience has remained with

me to this day. My current research examines global history in the seventeenth century, and it would be a very different project—indeed, I probably wouldn't have undertaken it at all—had I not gone out into the world in my twenties and learned to deal with the uncertainties and revelations that come with encountering and interacting with people from other cultures.

Interculturality is the term that I use in my scholarly work to capture the subtle process that leads from interaction to change as people from different cultures meet each other. This process is nothing special — it is a fact of everyday existence in ethnically diverse Vancouver — but it is extremely important. It is the condition that encourages UBC to ask its students to become global citizens, and its scholars to contribute to global as well as local knowledge. It is also the circumstance that shapes life in the College. It is how we live, how we learn, and why we enjoy what we do.

Those who get the chance to navigate their way across the cultural boundaries within which they were born never return the same. And this is as it should be. In a world in which cultural difference is often the ticket for keeping scoundrels in power and nations at war, learning to be vulnerable to cultural dialogue and change is a very good thing. It keeps us aware of the rest of the world. And it reminds us of the insignificance of difference in the face of all that we share.

musicians and ensembles from around the world, meeting new people, hearing her music performed, and reveling in the feeling that comes when audience members express how they have connected with her music.

Dorothy's musical focus is on works for solo, chamber and orchestral ensembles. Recent performances of her music include concerts at the Music Gallery in Toronto and Songfest in Malibu, California, as well as at the PAN Music Festival in Seoul, Korea. Current and/or recent projects include a new flute concerto for her husband, Paolo Bortolussi, a work for the Vancouver Bach Choir's Christmas Concert, and a three-year residency with the Albany (NY) Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to her teaching and composition responsibilities, Dorothy has been instrumental in ensuring the success of the Performing and Visual Arts Series at St. John's College. Students and professors from the School of Music, as well as professional musicians, have come to the College at Dorothy's invitation to perform and discuss music. SJC residents have been treated to behind-the-scenes glimpses of the life of a musician and the preparations for performing, and introduced to music from a variety of cultures, such as South America, China and Korea. The series also allows developing musicians to showcase their talents while providing residents with an introduction to, and ultimately, a better understanding of, the arts.

We are grateful to Dorothy for sharing her time and talents, and feel fortunate that she chose to come to UBC and become one of the newest Senior Fellows of St. John's College.

## The St. John's archive

By: Principal Tim Brook

Over the past few years, visitors to St. John's College have begun asking me whether the College would be willing to receive materials relating to St. John's University, our parent institution in Shanghai. These inquiries have come from Johannians who have copies of materials dealing with the former University, from the families of Johannians who have passed away and wish to find a home for materials that might otherwise be thrown away, and from China scholars who have visited the College.

My answer has been an enthusiastic yes. As a historian, there is nothing I like better than an archive. Documents from the past — books, letters, photographs, scrapbooks — are where I as a historian go to access the experiences of the past and bring them into the present. I am delighted to receive anything relating to the history of St. John's University.

The inspiration to start an archive came during the reunion of the SJU Medical Alumni here at the College last August. (See page 8.) On that occasion, Jhn. Robert Yuan presented me with a

scrapbook of photographs taken at the SJUAA reunion held at the College eight years ago. The first phase of the College had just been newly completed on that occasion; so newly completed, in fact, that some of the photographs of the Fairmont Social Lounge show scaffolding.

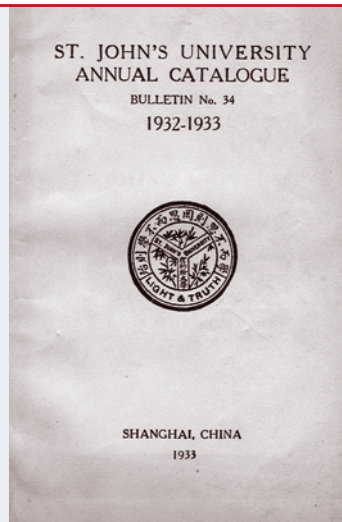
I was further motivated to start the archive when Jhn. Kenneth Liang wrote to inquire whether the College might wish to receive a collection of articles written by Jhn. Jesse Hwa, who passed away last spring. Through Kenneth's good offices, Jesse's wife Dolores generously sent the collection to the College on CD-ROM. It includes reminiscences, travel writings, and reflections on topics as diverse as Mark Twain and the experience of turning eighty.

The College is also amassing a small library of books relating to the history of St. John's. Books that have come to the College over the past twelve months include Rose Tse's *The Gift of Ah Marr*, which I acquired at a lunch with Johannians in San Francisco last year; and Deke Erh's *Hallowed Halls: Protestant Colleges in Old China*, with its twelve pages of beautiful photographs of the old campus,

which I purchased in Shanghai a year ago. On my visit to Shanghai last October, Edward Xu presented me with a copy of his *Jiaoyu yu zongjiao: zuo wei chuanjiao meijie de Sheng Yuehan daxue* (Education and Religion: St. John's University as a Missionary Bridge), as well as his co-authored *Shanghai Fanwangdu Sheng yuehan daxue* (St. John's University at Fanwangdu, Shanghai).

Even more intriguing are the copies we are collecting of actual publications of the University. We have a copy of the commemorative volume, *St. John's University, 1879-1929*, both in the original and in a photocopy. Of the Yearbooks that were published annually, I acquired a photocopy of the 1924 Yearbook from the Penniman Library at the University of Pennsylvania two years ago, and last year Kenneth Liang sent a copy of the 1934 Yearbook on CD-ROM.

Still, the most curious item to arrive at the College this year is a gift from Michael Schoenhals, a Swedish specialist on the Cultural Revolution, who spent last year in the College as a visiting scholar with his wife, the anthropologist Guo Xiaolin. The gift is a copy of the University's Annual Catalogue for 1932-33, which lists all the courses, instructors, and rules for the University that year. Michael



The St. John's University Catalogue, Bulletin No. 34, is just one of the many treasured items in the College's growing archive.

has been a friend since we first met in Shanghai in 1975; he is also a voracious collector of historical materials on twentieth-century China. The Catalogue was something he bought in a bookstore in Sweden in 1999. After making a return visit in September, Michael decided that the Catalogue would do better at the College than in his personal collection. It arrived in October—just in time for me to quote passages in my remarks at the Fall Dinner.

Are other Catalogues and Yearbooks still in existence? It would be wonderful to find them. Johannians looking for a home for their memorabilia need look no further than the College.

# St. John's celebrates academic success of students

## A look at the lives and motivations of our recent fellowship winners

*Academic excellence is one of the cornerstones of life at St. John's College, which is why we are pleased to announce that seven of our residents were recently awarded prestigious fellowships in recognition of their hard work and dedication.*

*To put a face to their achievements, we interviewed each recipient and asked about their nationality and citizenship, area of study and reasons for selecting it, their motivation for coming to UBC and residing at the College, their opinions on the best part of living at SJC, and their goals. We're proud of their success and of the contributions they are making as part of the SJC community.*

### CC Wong Memorial Fellowship



#### Desmond Cheung

Now in his second year at UBC and his third year in Canada, Desmond is a native of the United Kingdom currently pursuing doctoral studies in the history of later-imperial China. He made the move to Vancouver and UBC from the University of Toronto in order to continue training with his supervisor, Dr. Tim Brook, who took over as Principal of St. John's College last year. Desmond considers the move a happy one that has land-

ed him at "Canada's leading university for the study of China," and one that allows him to live in the truly international and interdisciplinary environment of the College.

"To live with such a diverse group of people, among whom I now count some good friends (who have a wealth of experiences and knowledge beyond China!), is for me the most attractive aspect of living at the College."



#### Bijan Azadi Borujeni

Iranian-born, Bijan came to UBC

in 2003 to pursue his love of Mechanical Engineering, which he describes as "a combination of imagination, art and mathematics" — all of which he considers sources of inspiration. An email from his current supervisor, Dr. Nimal Rajapakse, regarding a proposed area of research is what drew Bijan to UBC over several other potential universities. The opportunity to study "mathematical modeling of the behaviour of shape memory alloys" was an exact fit with his research interests — and apparently the excellent Vancouver weather didn't hurt either!

Taking up residency at SJC was actually "plan B" for Bijan; it was to be a temporary stay while he searched for an off-campus apartment, but the wonderful food, international environment and extracurricular activities have convinced him SJC is the best place

to live. To emphasize his point, Bijan says, "When I came to Canada, I never imagined I would play on a soccer team or play my Tombak in a concert anymore."

His career goal is to become a university professor. His lifelong goal, however, is to continually engage in discovery of the world, "to explore the complex and amazing interrelation amongst all of the tiny particles of the world — beyond the mere physical laws — to understand and explain the events most of us simply call 'chance'".

### Sir Quo-Wei Lee Fellowship



#### Jie (April) Cai

Jie Cai, a citizen of the Peoples' Republic of China, has chosen to specialize in economics, globalization and the related area of knowledge spillover. Her interest in these areas stems from her understanding that the ability to innovate new products is the source of monopoly power for developed countries, and that if

developing countries cannot learn to innovate, they can act only as “manufacturing workshops.” She believes the ability and speed of learning is crucial to reducing the world income gap.

Jie was drawn to UBC based on the strong international reputation of her current faculty group, but more personal motivations attracted her to St. John’s College: “The College’s international environment and social life are a good complement to my academic life, and I feel better when I can contribute to the community [which SJC allows me to do].”

Eventually she hopes to be in a position to give policy suggestions to developing countries. In the meantime, she will continue to enjoy the friendship that comes with living at SJC.

## George Shen Fellowship



### Navjot Singh

Navjot Singh is enthusiastic about life, his studies and all things “St. John’s”. This software engineering specialist in the Department of Computer Science came to UBC from India. He chose his field of study out of fascination for all that software can do for us today — as well as for the “less pleasing” reality that it has become complicated and difficult to maintain.

“Building tools to help programmers keep up with this increasing complexity of computer software is an interesting challenge that

motivates my research,” he explained.

High on Navjot’s list of reasons for choosing to study at UBC was Vancouver’s reputation as a beautiful city — though he claims he wasn’t told it would rain! He loves all aspects of life at SJC, including the food (which he commented on frequently), the great mix of people, the variety of lectures and concerts, and the formal dinners.

“Seriously, I knew these would be my last years in school and I wanted to be able to look back and say, ‘I had a good time!’”

When this chapter of his life is over, Navjot’s future goals involve money, travel and “software without bugs,” as well as learning to skate and play the guitar.

## Itoko Muraoka Fellowship



### Jean Kim

Jean Kim is a student of Language and Literacy Education, specializing in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). She calls Korea home, but she’s always had a passion for teaching, and English has been an integral part of her life after many years of living overseas.

“It was a natural choice for me to combine these two interests and pursue an academic career in language education,” she explained. “I am also interested in the relationship between language and identity, based on my personal experiences as a Korean-English bilingual.”

Jean selected UBC because the University’s TESL Program is recognized as one of the best in the world. It also gave her the opportunity to return to Vancouver, where she attended high school 10 years ago. As for life at the College, she is grateful for the great friendships she has formed with fellow SJC residents: “I’ve enjoyed meeting students from different academic backgrounds, which has helped me broaden my views in many ways.”

Among her future goals and aspirations are teaching at a university in Korea or North America and continuing to conduct language education research.

## Reginald and Annie Van Fellowship



### Sandra Kliem

Mathematics and the research of probability are what captivate Sandra Kliem, a SJC resident from Berlin, Germany.

“Even as a child, I liked playing with numbers and solving puzzles, but studying maths seemed a bit too theoretical for me,” reflected Sandra. “Now I really enjoy it, especially when calculations almost ‘magically’ work out and give you a new understanding of a model.”

Sandra was drawn to UBC by her probability group and the chance to meet new people and live in a foreign country. She knew nothing about the great beaches — or the rain! She

loves the friendly atmosphere of the College and believes the best part about living here is the interesting conversations she has with fellow residents at breakfast and dinnertime.

Sandra hopes to finish her PhD, continue working in academia, and along the way, “solve the ‘magic formula’ of how to best combine research and leisure life!”



### Colin Pridy

Colin Pridy is a Canadian pursuing his PhD in Music Composition. He’s enjoyed a life-long fascination with music, and in particular the sound of orchestral film scores. The latter sparked his interest in learning the piano, playing by ear, improvising, and eventually, studying music composition.

UBC’s quality of instruction, combined with a great city and great weather (he’s serious!), confirmed his choice in universities. The ability to “contribute to and learn from a community of friends and colleagues” is what keeps him at SJC.

Colin hopes to make a living doing what he loves and in the process, contribute something valuable and beneficial to his field: “My goal is to promote the creation of music that is relevant to disciplines and areas of interest beyond those traditionally addressed by new music.”



Volunteers in action! Members of the SJC Outreach Committee help prepare the holiday dinner at the Living Room Drop-In Centre.

## Outreach committee brings compassion to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

By: Muhannad Al-Darbi,  
Junior Fellow

### An open letter of appreciation to committee members & residents



SJC volunteers gathered for a quick photo after a job well done.

I am happy to tell you that the December 9th holiday dinner at the Lookout Society's Living Room Drop-in Centre on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside was an outstanding success!

My heart (and I trust yours too) was overwhelmed with happiness and joy as a result of what we all did that evening. Blessed are those who have had the chance to draw a beautiful smile on a tired face, so you can tell how blessed we were by doing this for almost 150 people. I expect that when most of us look upon our lives, it will be moments like this — when we have done something for others — that stand out.

I keep remembering that each one of the people we met is a wonderful human being. They have hearts, feelings and stories to tell... if they find listeners.

Anyone of us could have been (or might one day be) in their place. Perhaps we have been a bit luckier. Regardless, we have countless blessings, and for that we may be thankful.

I was touched by how friendly, kind, polite, and decent were the guests of the Living Room. Several times when I gave out the last plate on my tray, I noticed that person gave it to someone older or to one of the ladies. With a smile on his face, one gentleman told me, "Ladies always first".

Everyone thanked us for our help — with words, smiles and tired expressions of sincere and deep appreciation. Try to imagine a similar reception in a five-star hotel or restaurant.

Indeed it is true that teamwork allows common people to attain uncommon results. Some

people want it to happen, some wish it to happen, others make it happen. The members of the SJC Outreach Committee made it happen that night. Wonderful volunteers like those on our committee and many of our fellow residents are not paid — not because you are worthless, but because you are priceless. I know that you all feel what we did was just a drop in the ocean, but trust me, the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.

Thank you to every one of you who worked so hard to make this event a successful and enjoyable experience that I hope will be repeated many times in years to come.

# Visiting French professor offers insight on modern China

## A review of the first 2005-06 Distinguished Scholar in Residence

From October 22 to 26, 2005, St. John's College had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Pierre-Etienne Will as our first Distinguished Scholar in Residence for the 2005-2006 academic year. Professor Will, a specialist in the history of 18th-century China, holds the chair in modern China at France's most prestigious institution, the Collège de France. He is also a director of research at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences) in Paris.

Professor Will is best known for his foundational work on the public granary system and famines in late-imperial China.

While at St John's, he delivered a series of lectures discussing his current research interests concerning notions of "democracy," "constitutional control," and "human rights" within Chinese political and philosophical traditions. Utilizing an impressive variety of sources, Professor Will examined the richness of these traditions as they relate to contemporary China. His lecture topics ranged from 19th-century Euro-American discussions of Chinese democracy, to the surprisingly deep involvement of Chinese intellectuals in Eleanor Roosevelt's Human Rights Commission, leading to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

By: Tim Sedo, Junior Fellow

In these talks, Professor Will addressed the "Asian values" debate that has simmered since the 1990s, when Asian intellectuals and politicians argued the existence of a particular Asian way of governance predicated on historically and culturally distinct values. In contrast to the Judeo-Christian values that often inform the political and social organization of many Western societies, these "Asian values" are seen as largely Confucian in nature, stressing loyalty to the family, the value of the collective over the individual and above all, social and state stability. Many leaders in Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan

have used "Asian values" to challenge the hegemonic discourse of Western democratic ideals.

Professor Will's lectures addressed this polarity between "Western democracy" and "Confucian authoritarianism". He demonstrated that indigenous Chinese traditions frequently held notions of "democracy" and "human rights" in high esteem, even if they were not articulated as such, and that these values were noted by many 19th-century Europeans and Americans. To Professor Will, these traditions have been sadly overlooked (or actively ignored) by the contemporary Chinese state, which could benefit by acknowledging the depth of Chinese thinking on democratic principles, human rights, and constitutional controls.



## Support sought for the St. John's College UBC Endowment Fund

Thanks to the generosity of alumni, the inimitable spirit and character of St. John's University (Shanghai) lives on at St. John's College at UBC. Here, a new generation of Johannians has the opportunity to live and interact in an academic setting that fosters fellowship, intercultural exchange and interdisciplinary dialogue.

Alumni interested in sustaining this enriched academic, social and cultural experience may wish

to contribute to the Endowment Fund in the following three key areas:

- **Distinguished Visitor Lectureships;**
- **Student Support through fellowships and academic student exchanges; and**
- **The Artist in Residence Program.**

Donations are accepted by the University of British Columbia, the Hong Kong Foundation for UBC, the American Foundation

for UBC, and the UK Foundation for UBC. By giving to the University or one of these foundations, donors will receive tax receipts that may be used against source income in Canada, Hong Kong, the UK or the USA.

UBC is pleased to work with donors to ensure appropriate naming recognition, which provides a meaningful and enduring tribute in a prestigious setting.

For more information about supporting the College and to learn about tax benefits, please contact:

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St. John's University Medical alumni with SJC Principal Tim Brook (back row, centre) and his wife Fay Sims (front row, 5th from the left).



## About St. John's College

St. John's College has roots that extend back to St. John's University in Shanghai, China. Graduates of the University—known as Johanneans—are able, through a blending of Chinese and Western approaches to teaching, to be at home anywhere in the world. Continuing in the tradition of excellence and internationalism of its namesake, St. John's College at UBC aims to build links between different parts of the world, and to serve as an intellectually and culturally diverse centre for its members.

For more information about St. John's College at UBC, please contact:

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## St. John's University medical alumni reunite

St. John's College was honoured to host a reunion of the St. John's University Medical alumni in North America, August 26-28, 2005. Some 20 alumni gathered at the College, staying two nights to learn about contemporary student life, and gather with life-long friends.

Current College residents presented on a variety of topics, including, "Life in the College," "Recent Trends in the Study of China," and "Modern Medical Education Through the Eyes of a UBC Student". Guests also enjoyed a performance of classical chamber music by College musicians.

The reunion proved to be an inspiring weekend for everyone involved, as indicated by an alumnus who commented, "The current young generation, with their idealistic views of the world, are full of inquisitive hopes." We wish this to be a trait shared by both the original and new Johanneans.

## Professional honour for the Principal

### Principal Tim Brook recognized by the Canadian Historical Association

We are very proud to announce that Principal Tim Brook was recently named the winner of the 2005 **François-Xavier Garneau Medal**. The Canadian Historical Association (CHA) bestows the honour every five years for an outstanding Canadian contribution to historical research during the preceding five years. Principal Brook earned the prize for his book, *The Confusions of*

*Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*, which was lauded as "a wonderfully vivid and complex picture of the economic and social life of Ming China" and "a model of the historian's craft".

Founded in 1922, the CHA is a national organization dedicated to historical research and scholarship in all fields of history. The CHA oversees a vigorous publication program; lobbies

governments, archives and museums on issues relating to the preservation and availability of historical records; organizes an annual conference that brings together historians from across the country; and offers a number of prizes to recognize and promote excellence in historical scholarship, of which the Garneau Medal is the most prestigious.