



LEARNING  
THROUGH  
THE  
ARTS

WWW.LTTA.CA



# Developing minds through arts

‘When kids are focused and enthusiastic, the sky’s the limit’



Royal Conservatory Music president Dr. Peter Simon: We have found new horizons.

## Canada’s greatest arts education program

As Canadians, we grow up aware of our vast natural resources – water, the forest, agriculture, oil and gas. Born in the shadow of Confederation, The Royal Conservatory of Music has 120 years of experience with the greatest natural resource and unexplored territory in the world: the potential for human creativity.

We believe this great potential is found where we all live, in communities from coast to coast and through the North. It is on this local scale that we have worked, and on this local scale that we have touched lives in each and every one of our great provinces and territories for more than five generations. We have created an organization that is uniquely Canadian and increasingly international.

We have evolved from a school of music to a national force for education and cultural development. Our work across Canada and throughout the world has provided tangible evidence of our status as a leader in the development of arts-based learning programs, and we take our place as artistic innovators, both nationally and internationally, in a genuine revolution of educational enterprise.

Once we earned recognition solely for a focus on music education. Now, we earn praise for our global excellence in arts education, shaping the world that future generations will inherit.

Once we had our sights set on teaching and curriculum. Now we have found new horizons and responsibilities advancing the cultural interests of our learners, our communities and the nation.

But the one thing that has remained constant is that The Royal Conservatory of Music has never been bound by physical space. Our teachers and students have always been found in each and every community in Canada, and on stages the world over.

And now we have web-based access by students to acclaimed international teachers and performers, new broadcast opportunities and a virtual centre for learning for the world. The TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning will provide a place for artists, educators and the community to come together and establish the world’s first truly integrative learning community.

Our Building National Dreams campaign for The Royal Conservatory of Music is making this all possible. Together, Canadians have raised more than \$70-million dollars to achieve this goal.

Go to our website, rcmusic.ca, to learn more. Once you are there, I invite you to join with us and become an important part of the greatest arts education story in Canadian history.

It’s a morning math class at Gosford Public School in north Toronto – a special morning math class.

Instead of sitting quietly at their desks with textbooks open to a lesson on measuring, the fifth graders are in the gym warming up their joints and muscles to the hypnotic percussion of Swedish musician Jeff Bennett.

Instead of standing at a blackboard, chalk in hand, their instructor this morning, dancer Michelle Silagy, is moving purposefully around the room. She wants to see centimetres, and the children present pinky fingers; decimetres, and the children offer hands; metres, and arms and legs start moving.

Two minutes into this innovative classroom experience and the students are fully engaged

in a way that would be hard to imagine in a row-of-desks scenario. The dancer has their full attention and they are ready to learn.

Silagy, one of 500 LTTA artists in Canada, is teaching math through dance. These are disparate disciplines, unless you are thinking innovatively and creatively . . . or until you see the children on the floor, laying open hands side by side to make two decimetres, making square centimetres with their fingers, and ultimately measuring the length of the gym while prancing to the lively beat of Zap Mama.

Tracy Houser, LTTA regional manager for British Columbia, explains the careful integration of art form and lesson plan that sets this program apart from others that bring the arts into schools.

It is not a matter of artists coming in to teach students to paint, sculpt or dance, she says; it is using art as a vehicle for teaching specific curriculums: math, science, social studies, language arts and technology.

For this reason, special care is taken to choose the right artists for the job.

“We want people who are passionate about students and learning,” Ms. Houser says. “They need to be people with empathy and compassion, and the ability to work with group dynamics. They need to care as much about sharing the work as the work itself. That passion brings energy and excitement – it ignites things.”

LTTA finds artists through newspaper advertising, cultural organizations, arts councils and community groups. The response from the

artistic community is “huge,” Ms. Houser says. Applicants are invited to an information night, where the program is explained and they can discover whether or not there is mutual interest. The artists who are considered a good fit are invited back to present a 15-minute lesson plan based on a specific curriculum.

The ones who make the grade are offered a paid position and receive more training. They meet with teachers to better understand their specific goals and the needs of the students.

The artists are given a minimum of six days of training a year, but some take as many as nine days, and are expected to visit the same classroom three times each semester.

ARTS / continued on page 5



## Students flip for LTTA

Students say they love having the LTTA program in their classroom: test scores say they learn better.

100,000 students.  
350 schools.  
12 countries.

Founded in 1994 by The Royal Conservatory Music, Learning Through the Arts has earned the praise that is starting to come in: 12 years after launch, its reach is great and continues to grow.

Yvonne Simpson, LTTA manager for the Greater Toronto Area, was a visual arts consultant for the North York Board of Education in the early nineties. She recalls the beginning: “With this new RCM program, we wanted to use the arts as a way to help students learn core curriculum concepts. We knew that we all learn in different ways; we needed to find new ways to meet the needs of all students.”

Today, LTTA involves 100,000 students in 350 schools across Canada and is at the pilot stage in 12 countries around the world.

And what has Learning Through the Arts become? Is it cross-cultural? Does it cross all grades? Cross all disciplines?

“It is a truly inter-disciplinary approach,” says LTTA executive director Angela Elster. “The whole idea of the program is to meet the needs of all children. We have the capacity to focus on and support cultural diversity and unique learning styles. LTTA artists from Cape Breton have led workshops in Toronto. A trained LTTA Ottawa artist delivers workshops in Thunder Bay or a Thunder Bay artist delivers workshops in Vancouver.”

Learning Through the Arts is available in all grades – welcomed in elementary years and capable of having a impact on secondary students.

The whole idea of the program is to meet the needs of all children.

“You can’t predict what will happen,” says Judi Symes, an English teacher at Toronto’s Northview Secondary. Every class is different. The artists are usually very touched by some kids who have produced an unexpected result. It is emotional.

“Often kids who are ‘difficult’ in a regular class absolutely shine in Learning Through the Arts. They’ll take leadership and be just so enthusiastic. And the artists can see this happening before their eyes. English as a second language kids have written about appreciating, understanding and being proud of their own culture as a result of having explored another culture through Learning Through the Arts. It’s a super program.”

Currently, individual schools must fund a portion of the costs for a Learning Through the Arts program within their budgets.

Symes is an enthusiastic supporter, but wishes this innovative program could count on more outside support, adding, “I would really like it to be funded so that every grade could use it.”

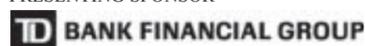
“The core belief or concept of the program is even stronger now than,” Simpson adds. “We have seen such exciting things happen; we know we want to stretch even farther in helping students learn. It gives them a chance to be creative thinkers, to know that there is not just one way of doing something. The teachers have grown so much as well. We want students to really learn and internalize, not just cover material. LTTA helps learning happen in a joyful and creative way.”

There is growing interest among business leaders in how creative approaches such as Learning Through the Arts can spur innovative thinking – the kind that will be essential in the new knowledge economy. If that message takes hold, there’s reason to believe that more support can come for schools that wish to share this new energy.

“If I take an objective view and look at what we’ve built,” says Elster, “growing from nine schools to 350 schools in just 12 years, at the numbers of students, the numbers of teachers, the numbers of LTTA artists; and when you add the academic research findings, I would say that the RCM and LTTA must be at the leading edge of funded thinking in education.”

We would like to thank all of our generous supporters for helping to make Learning Through the Arts accessible to 100,000 children nationwide and opening the door to limitless possibilities.

PRESENTING SPONSOR



TECHNOLOGY SPONSOR



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



MEDIA SPONSORS



LTTA wishes to acknowledge that the ltt.ca website and lesson plan collection were made possible with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through Canada Culture Online.



- The Matthews Family
- Salamander Foundation
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Investors Group
- Imperial Oil Charitable Foundation
- Vancouver Foundation
- Henry N R Jackman Foundation
- Toronto Community Foundation, Toronto Fund
- CIBC
- IBM Canada
- SM Blair Family Foundation
- Lloyd Carr-Harris Foundation
- Copywell

# A new stage for every age

To reach children of all ages, LTTA is developing programs at elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Just as children have different styles of learning, different age groups present unique challenges.

After recess at Gosford Public School in Toronto, for instance, the first order of business is getting a class of still-hyped second graders to sit down and pay attention.

Then Cathy Miyata makes an entrance and, suddenly, they're all ears.

Miyata, an author and professional storyteller, is visiting the class to teach language arts through storytelling and drama. It's clear immediately that the students love her; some even rush up to Miyata with welcoming hugs.

The lesson today is about how characters in stories convey different emotions and how, by listening to stories, we can understand these emotions in ourselves and express them.

The class begins with students playing a game called mad, sad, glad – an emotional variation of rock, paper, scissors, in which they take turns expressing these feelings through gesture and facial expression.

Next, Miyata starts the story, which is from the rich oral tradition of Jamaica. It's about a mean man who, under the spell of an old crone, has unwittingly married a gaulin bird that he thinks is a flesh-and-blood woman.

The story would have been interesting if read from a book. But it's so much more compelling as the artist speaks in a colourful patois and embodies the characters through broad gestures and evocative facial expressions.

Periodically she brings the action to an abrupt stop and invites the children to stand up and join her in portraying the characters. They are alternately mean and happy and sad, as the story demands, and are especially surprised when they discover that they are married to a giant bird.

"Storytelling is a much more powerful medium than reading," Miyata says. "When I read to a child, the relationship is with the book. When I tell, there is a relationship between me and each listener. It is much more than just a story. It is an experience."

Miyata uses stories of different complexities for

different age groups and believes that starting children in the program early can help them develop a life-long appreciation for the arts.

Many of the second graders are eager and uninhibited, throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the roles of husband and crone and bird.

A subsequent visit to Pleasant View Jr. High illustrates the same kind of process, but experienced by seventh graders, and it is clear immediately that the age group presents a different challenge.

Here the students are more self-conscious, less spontaneous, aware of peer pressure and eager to avoid looking silly. While they seem eager to welcome dancer Lincoln Shand, who is here to teach literature through dance, the class doesn't start with hugs. Instead the students file into the gym in a neat column, make a circle and wait to see what he has to show them.

To get them to loosen up, Shand, a member of several independent dance companies in Toronto, starts moving and instructs them to follow.

"Don't think," he says to a beat – not something you would expect a teacher to say. "No thought. Impulse. That's it."

After warm-up, the main lesson involves reading passages from Kenneth Oppel's *Silverwing*, a novel for young people about a wayward bat that loses

his way and teams up with another loner bat for a journey home and the process of self-discovery. The students work in groups to create short choreographed routines that give physical expression to words in their passages, evoking images such as worship, winter, pain, wind, flight, drops of water falling on a lake.

"It's another way of looking at the words," Shand says. "There is no right or wrong here; it's how you feel about it and that's the great thing about art."

Kit Kleiser is the head of visual arts, dance and drama at Pleasant View, where the goal is to expose all seventh graders to LTTA.

It helps build self-esteem and confidence. "Some kids just soar in the arts, where they might struggle more in other subjects."

And some of those students go on to pursue creative careers.



Storyteller Cathy Miyata holds the attention of second graders at Gosford Public School.



Whether they're mask makers, bakers, painters, dancers or drummers, Learning Through the Arts adds excitement to all subjects for teachers and students.

Together we're celebrating the achievements of Learning Through the Arts.



At TD Bank Financial Group, we're proud to support The Royal Conservatory of Music. It's just part of our commitment to making our communities better.



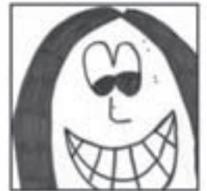
## MEET THE JURY



Kevin  
(Age: 8)



Samantha  
(Age: 10)



Emma  
(Age: 9)

### The 2006 Shaw Rocket Prize Finalists

**Being Ian**  
Studio B (Being Ian) Productions Inc.  
Vancouver

**Harry and His Bucket Full of Dinosaurs**  
CCI Entertainment Ltd.  
Toronto

**Heads Up!**  
Soapbox Productions Inc.  
North Vancouver

**Naturally Sadie**  
Decode Entertainment Inc.  
Toronto

**Poko Season II**  
Halifax Film Company  
Halifax

The Learning Through the Arts national student jury will vote for the \$50,000 winner from these finalist programs.

Shaw Rocket Prize – celebrating the best in Canadian children's television.



# Aboriginal program preserves culture

As Aboriginal communities in Canada continue to work to restore traditional values, some are finding that the arts are powerful tools for merging those values with a fast-changing world based on information and technology.

Built on the same foundation as The Royal Conservatory of Music's Learning Through the Arts initiative being used across the country and overseas, the Aboriginal program uses specially trained community artists to work in partnership with teachers to deliver core curriculum. In addition to providing culturally appropriate and exciting ways to teach the core curriculum, the Aboriginal program helps preserve and celebrate Aboriginal culture by providing opportunities to bring indigenous languages and art forms to a new generation.

At the same time, it creates dynamic role models for Aboriginal students both inside and outside the classroom.

"It's a compelling vision for education," says Heather Shand, director of the LTTA Aboriginal program, "one that is a true partnership between communities – both on and off the reserve – schools, principals, artists, teachers, students and parents. Together they shape a program that addresses the particular needs and strengths of the schools and their communities."

The Aboriginal program brings inspiring indigenous artists into classrooms as partners for the teachers. Together, they create curricular lessons that are exciting, fun and relevant for students.

Students are taught subjects like the Ojibway language through beading, habitat and wildlife preservation through hide painting, weather systems through music, algebra through drumming and health studies through media arts.

Launched officially in 2004, the program is in 11 schools, seven of them on reserves.



Students in the Aboriginal program learn cultural values and core subjects through the arts.

The most recent initiative is a pilot project for inner-city students at the Niji Mahkwa Aboriginal School in downtown Winnipeg. The project, developed in consultation with elders, is called Empowerment Through the Arts.

In addition to core curriculum, this program focuses on building students' sense of belonging, their self-esteem and community pride. The goal is to empower young people to make positive choices in their lives.

Principal Myra Laramee believes that the Aboriginal program will

develop "the potential for contribution to community and people." This service notion is a traditional Aboriginal concept that requires a human to become the best helper imaginable.

"An artist can be a powerful mentor for a young person who may not have any other avenue to access a positive role model," Laramee says.

Engaging students, boosting attendance levels and increasing their respect for themselves and their community are paramount project goals. An integral part of the

Aboriginal program, says Shand, is building a strong relationship with the indigenous communities, on or off reserve.

To ensure the initiative continues to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities, it relies on a 12-member Aboriginal Advisory Committee that consists of elders, corporate leaders, senior educators, former band chiefs, artists, lawyers and educational consultants.

One of the Aboriginal program's most enthusiastic supporters is Danika Billie Littlechild, a lawyer who lives

and works on the Hobbema Reserve where she was raised, 200 kilometres north of Calgary. Littlechild is a member of the advisory committee that helped create the program.

"What is interesting is how the program developed," says Littlechild. "It was teachers, principals and community members who decided what was most important for the kids, using art as a conduit for learning things like belonging, community and honesty. What is great now is that we have a program that can be funded, a formal existing program that can incorporate traditional ways of learning. The interest is immense."

No fewer than 10 schools in her local treaty area have confirmed their interest in LTTA, says Littlechild.

Traditional ways of learning, she says, are a big part of the answer to getting kids to "reconnect" with their communities and express themselves in positive ways, especially important in a community like Hobbema, whose 12,000 people are facing high crime, drug-use and unemployment rates.

She attributes low graduation rates to a lack of engagement by the children. "They don't get a sense of accomplishment, or their accomplishments are not recognized. Let's say they don't get math, but when you start teaching it with the arts, it flips the coin for them. The program gives them the feeling that they can learn, that they can do it."

Ivan Augustine has been principal of the Elsipogtog School in Big Cove, N.B., 100 kilometres north of Moncton for 10 years. He says the band-operated school in the Mi'kmaq community of 2,500 people was introduced to the Aboriginal program last year when LTTA personnel held a professional development session at a nearby school.

"The kids love it," Augustine says of the program. "They just gobble up information."



Angela Elster: LTTA executive director

## Learning Through the Arts: a new school of thought

Globally, the challenges in education can be summed up in three statements: higher student expectations at younger ages; increasingly complex classrooms; and fewer resources.

Over the past two decades, public schools throughout Canada and around the globe have come under increasing pressure to return to "basics" in education. As part of the direction, schools sometimes align success with the ability to achieve certain measures on standardized tests. In other words it appears that in order to produce citizens capable of functioning in the demanding world of the future, specialists argue, schools need to get back to basics – the consequence of which is often to abandon the arts.

In the 1990s Dr. Peter Simon, the president of The Royal Conservatory of Music recognized the enormous crisis we were facing and decided The RCM had a responsibility to respond with a solution. LTTA is a fundamentally new approach to education that delivers core subjects through aesthetic means.

Educators around the world are recognizing the value of this curricular fusion as LTTA has become one of the most extensive arts-based public education initiatives in the world. Yes, it's proven to increase test scores but more importantly the value of deep and meaningful understanding goes far beyond academic benefits by providing emotional, physical and social benefits.

What have we accomplished in 12 years of LTTA? We have grown from nine schools to 350 schools across Canada. We provided quality professional development for thousands of teachers and hundreds of Canadian artists. We have transformed the classrooms of tens of thousands of students. We have honoured our responsibility to respond to a crisis.

Immersing learners with artistic process as part of their daily curriculum cultivates a sense of imagination, emotional intelligence, capacity for reflection, compassion, passion, ability to communicate and a way to make meaning of their world. As our societies and economies become more knowledge-based and as we begin to respond to environmental, economic, social and cultural dilemmas, we will need to draw on creativity and compassion more than ever before.

LTTA has been fortunate to be headed by a visionary leader, Dr. Simon, and to be a division of a national education institution, The RCM. This has enabled us to hold the vision for school districts through times of change and restructuring.

When governments or school leadership change, stellar programs are too often at risk. The RCM and its board of directors have provided consistent support and a strong foundation on which to build this new paradigm in Canadian education.

LTTA is tremendously privileged to receive corporate, foundation and government support. The TD Financial Group, TELUS, Investors Group, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Weston Foundation, the Salamander Foundation and many, many others have demonstrated their commitment to positively influence the quality of life in communities across Canada. Individuals such as Judy and Wilmot Matthews and Neville Poy, too, have ensured that LTTA move forward by donating much needed funds.

Finally the support of government is crucial to the success of LTTA. The LTTA website, [www.ltta.ca](http://www.ltta.ca), is made possible with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through Canada Culture Online. Our extraordinary growth in Ontario is directly related to the support from the Ontario government, where the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture are joining forces to ensure schools have access to LTTA.

It is remarkable that these visionaries in government, foundations, corporations and individuals have understood that innovation in every aspect of human life is entrenched in each of our creative capability. We welcome you to contribute as a donor or become an LTTA school by visiting the Learning Through the Arts website at [www.ltta.ca](http://www.ltta.ca).

# Research proves powerful effects of arts on learning

Do children who learn through the arts actually perform better academically?

In November of 2002, Queen's University researchers Rena Upitis and Katharine Smithrim released results of a three-year, Canada-wide study involving more than 6,700 LTTA students and their teachers. The research concluded that students in the program scored as much as 11 percentile points better in math. In comparing 10- to 12-year-old students with peers in control schools, Dr. Upitis and Dr. Smithrim found that LTTA students score higher on standardized mathematics tests of computation and estimation after three years of involvement in the LTTA program.

The importance of the study is that it takes into account other factors correlated with academic achievement, such as mother's education level and whether children take music or other arts lessons outside school. The research showed that even when such factors are considered, LTTA's arts-infused learning methods can have a significant effect on academic achievement.

There were also important signs that these gains could be measured in an independent, standardized way – through the same measures that were being applied to learning in schools working with the assumption that achievement in core disciplines comes at the expense of involvement in the arts.

"It's not that there's some mysterious link between math and music," says Dr. Upitis, who holds a PhD in education from Harvard and diplomas in piano and vocal performance. "It seems that these children were just more engaged at school, more alert and interested and present. They were just happier to come to school."

The study showed that students, teachers, parents and administrators see positive effects from having LTTA in schools.

- Over the three-year period, there was a marked growth in the percentage of LTTA teachers who say the arts are an effective way to teach math, science and language.
- Nearly 90 per cent of all parents in the study – from all kinds of elementary schools – said that the arts motivate their children to learn.



Dr. Rena Upitis

- Ninety-eight per cent of teachers in the study believed the arts help children to learn – yet only 22 per cent have had any arts training themselves

The findings of the independent Queen's University study are echoed in studies conducted by other researchers. In the mid-1990s, three UCLA professors analyzed 25,000 students over 10 years and found that improved academic performance, attitude and behaviour had a positive correlation with long-term involvement in the arts. For example, 70.9 per cent of students with artistic pursuits scored in the top two quartiles in reading, compared to 46.3 per cent of the non-arts students.

LTTA is designed to integrate both analytic and creative processes. Because the method through which the child accesses the core lesson is designed specifically with his or her own context in mind, LTTA creates a classroom environment that is familiar, yet challenging – that calls on the child to participate in interpreting the lesson, in making meaning.

Looking ahead, LTTA continues to pursue follow-up research projects in tandem with the Queen's University team. A follow-up study focusing on Regina schools in 2005 concluded that LTTA has proven to be a potent professional development opportunity

for participating teachers. By the end of five years of involvement in LTTA, 86 per cent of involved teachers in the Regina School Board reported frequently using the arts as a teaching tool in all subject areas, compared to 18.5 per cent at the beginning of the study. Ninety-two per cent of LTTA teachers concluded that the arts could be used effectively to teach core subjects such as math, science and language. That LTTA has had a transformative effect on students, teachers and schools in the Regina School Board is beyond question.

"As an internationally recognized centre for music and arts education, The Royal Conservatory has long believed that participation in arts activities fosters social skills, creativity, and innovative thinking in young people," says RCM president Peter Simon.

"But thanks to the research, we now know the arts means even more – a better chance at academic achievement in school. Clearly, in an increasingly complex world, children need the arts more than ever."

Itta.ca

Learning Through the Arts™

Presenting the newest additions to our website!

Expanded French collection

Media arts lessons

Aboriginal lesson plans

A new school of thought

apla.ca

Itta.ca

Apprendre par les arts<sup>MC</sup>

Présentation des toutes dernières acquisitions à notre site Internet!

Collection élargie de leçons en français

Leçons sur les arts médiatiques

Plans de leçons des Autochtones

Une toute nouvelle école de pensée

apla.ca

# The RCM's building national dreams

In September of 2007, Learning Through the Arts – along with The Royal Conservatory of Music's other programs – will have a brand new home: the \$92-million TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning.

In 1991, the venerable Royal Conservatory of Music was operating its music and arts programs out of a 110-year-old building on Toronto's Bloor Street West. The Conservatory was experiencing tremendous growth, serving 500,000 Canadians annually, but desperately needed a facility that could meet its educational, artistic and technological needs.

In 2002 the Conservatory launched its Building National Dreams Campaign to fund the construction of one of the world's finest centres for performance and learning. It engaged the acclaimed Toronto firm Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects (KPMB) to restore the heritage building to its Victorian-era grandeur and simultaneously open its doors wide to the future. To date, the campaign has raised more than \$67-million – including a lead gift from TELUS Corporation, which received the naming rights for the new facility.

The Royal Conservatory of Music, Canada's largest and oldest independent arts educator, has been offering opportunities for learning and personal development through music and the arts since 1886. Through its innovative Learning Through the Arts (LTTA) program and the building of the TELUS Centre, the Conservatory is providing 21st-century educational tools to teach creative thinking and problem solving, while still honouring Canada's cultural past.

The ultra-modern TELUS Centre will wrap around the heritage building,



Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects (KPMB)

**The Royal Conservatory of Music's new building will house one of the world's best arts education centres.**

preserving the historic structure while adding 140,000 square feet to the existing 50,000 square feet. Performance venues include Koerner Hall, an acoustically superb, 1,140-seat facility, and the 150-seat Siemens Hall, a flexible rehearsal and performance space. There will also be new music studios and classrooms, a public café, a music library, broadcast centre and skylit lobbies. Merging technology with the Conservatory's world-renowned teaching methods, the centre will provide leading-edge music education opportunities for students in Canada and around the world. The new centre will allow the Conservatory to double its reach to a million Canadians a year.

One of the ways the Conservatory intends to accomplish that goal is with the Matthews Family Centre for Integrative Education, one of the many elements of the TELUS Centre. It will complement LTTA's programs across the country, making academic research, workshops, advanced training, and conferences for educators accessible to all Canadians.

"We are very excited about what the Matthews Centre will bring to The RCM," says Angela Elster, executive director of the LTTA program. "Its specialized facilities will bring together teachers, schools, parents and artists through excellent professional development sessions, distance education

and e-learning, bringing the creative benefits of LTTA to communities across Canada and abroad."

In designing the TELUS Centre, architects worked closely with a core user group to create teaching and instruction spaces that reflected the Conservatory's objectives. For example, to facilitate e-learning and video-conferencing, the centre was designed to provide a fully wired infrastructure to adapt easily to new technologies using broadband technology and advanced digital acoustic instruments.

This will permit specialized education content to be delivered to teachers and students across Canada and around the world. The Conservatory will be

able to build a professional development program for teachers using a combination of web-delivered video documentation and lesson plans. For example, an artist in rural Saskatchewan will be able to participate in a training workshop held at the TELUS Centre through video conferencing. Or a lesson that uses dance to teach geometry can be recorded at the TELUS Centre and made available to teachers across Canada on the LTTA website.

Beyond the benefits to the LTTA program, the TELUS Centre will also provide professionally equipped facilities for the Conservatory's diverse music programs, and provide new opportunities for music students to participate in master classes with the world's greatest artists.

It will also showcase Royal Conservatory students and faculty as well as producing and presenting artists from around the world in all music genres – classical, pop, world music and jazz – as well as theatre, film, lectures and comedy. Canadians from coast to coast will be able to enjoy these performances through recordings and broadcast.

The principles of artistic creativity may not have changed since the Conservatory was founded, but educational and artistic needs in the 21st century can benefit greatly from high technology and multimedia.

As Wilnot and Judy Matthews said after donating to the Building National Dreams Campaign: "Education must advance if our children are going to be prepared to be the future custodians of the world they will inherit. LTTA's pioneering methods fuse the arts with curriculum, helping children to handle complexity."

## Science behind LTTA's focus on the brain

It's a complex time in education. Expectations for teachers and schools have never been greater, yet the curriculum environment has never been more restrictive. It's never been harder for teachers who want to both meet expectations and bring joy, freshness and success to their schools and classrooms.

Over the past decade, research from the neurosciences has shown that traditional approaches do not necessarily reflect how the brain learns best. With its highly plastic, matrix-like structure, the brain functions most optimally when curriculum is presented in ways that engage the senses, address multiple learning styles and include emotional resonance.

During this time, neuroscientists have learned much about the developing brain – information that changes our understanding of how people learn. Learning Through the Arts grew as a result of a need to create a comprehensive program to pioneer new "brain-based" approaches to teaching and learning that would capitalize on parallel advancements in neuroscience, cognition and educational research.

Until very recently, it was believed that intelligence was fixed and could be affected very little by learning methods, styles and nutrition. Now, the research shows just the opposite: The brain is continuously modifying itself, possibly throughout life. The right learning environment can actually sculpt and mould a child's brain, in much the same way the right exercise program can build muscles and strength in the body.

Marion Diamond, a neuroscientist in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of California at Berkeley, explains: "Before 1960, the brain was considered by scientists to be immutable, subject only to genetic control. By 1994, however, two research laboratories proved that the morphology of the brain could be experientially altered. Since then, the capacity of the brain to respond to environmental input, specifically 'enrichment,' has become an accepted fact among neuroscientists, educators, and others."

The belief once was that different parts of the brain performed different functions, and so learning was compartmentalized to reflect that understanding. Now it is known that the brain is complex and interconnected, and functions best when its many parts are brought to problem-solving and learning.

Accordingly, integrative learning is fast becoming a new paradigm for learning and leadership in the 21st century. Fusion of core curriculum with engagement in the arts creates the optimal conditions for building and sculpting the brain, building neural networks among its many interrelated parts.

The arts, by their very nature, integrate mind and body, and link thinking with moving and doing. Learning is a whole-body activity and is most effective when it engages multiple senses, includes narrative and storytelling threads, and includes emotional resonance.

Professor emeritus Robert Sylwester from the University of Oregon explains: "Because our visual, auditory, and motor systems are essential to cognition, it's probable that the arts emerged to help develop and maintain them. Evidence from the brain sciences and evolutionary psychology increasingly suggests that the arts (along with such functions as language and math) play an important role in brain development and maintenance – so it's a serious matter for schools to deny children direct curricular access to the arts. Emotion, attention, and the arts aren't about the security of a correct answer, but rather about a jack-of-all-trades emotional brain that has quick, multiple, inventive solutions to most problems."

Many educators have postulated that because arts-infused learning calls on students to combine the analytic "left" brain functions and the more intuitive/gestalt "right" ones, it is effective in building neuronal links between the two. The arts engage the emotions/amygdala and by their nature cause us to connect memories, past sensations, and our experience of cultural history to the learning at hand. The hypothesis is that this creates more integrative thinkers – people who can consider more aspects of a problem, see its emotional and human dimensions, and bring a greater range of tools and perspectives to the solution. LTTA's approach to learning is based on how our brains work best and, in fact, how children experience the real world.



All levels of government, individuals, corporations and foundations have recognized that The Royal Conservatory of Music is at the centre of a revolution in modern thinking and education. Their investment will reap dividends for Canadians for generations. Our goal is nothing less than the establishment of the most progressive and relevant arts education centre in the world.

The Royal Conservatory of Music is grateful to the following donors for their support of the Campaign:

#### PUBLIC FUNDING

Government of Canada  
Government of Ontario  
Through the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program  
Government of Canada  
Through the Cultural Spaces Program

#### LEAD DONOR

In recognition of a generous contribution of \$10 million, the new facility will be named the TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning.

#### LEGACY GIFTS

(\$5 MILLION AND ABOVE)  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael and Sonja Koerner  
Mr. Ian Ilnatowycz and Dr. Marta Wiler

#### FOUNDERS CIRCLE GIFTS

(\$2,500,000 TO \$4,999,999)  
Mr. & Mrs. Leslie and Anna Dan  
Siemens Canada Limited

#### LANDMARK GIFTS

(\$1 MILLION TO \$2,499,999)  
Anonymous  
Alliance Atlantis Communications Inc.  
Asian Television Network Inc.  
Edwards Charitable Foundation  
Mr. R. Fraser Elliott  
Mr. & Mrs. Wilnot and Judy Matthews  
Microsoft Canada Co.  
Sun Microsystems of Canada Inc.  
TD Bank Financial Group  
Mrs. Marilyn Thomson  
Mrs. Gerardina Wharton

#### LEADERSHIP GIFTS

(\$500,000 TO \$999,999)  
Anonymous  
CIBC  
St. Joseph Communications

#### PREMIER GIFTS

(\$100,000 TO \$499,999)  
Anonymous  
BMO Financial Group  
Brimstone Holdings Limited  
Mr. & Mrs. Vivian and David Campbell  
Ms. M. Joan Chalmers  
Estate of Mrs. Ruth E. Day  
Mr. John F. Driscoll

Mr. & Mrs. James D. and Margaret Fleck  
Audrey S. Hellyer Charitable Foundation  
Hal Jackman Foundation  
The Henry White Kinnear Foundation  
Ms. Leila Mackenzie  
Ms. Florence Mintz  
Power Corporation of Canada  
Mr. Robert K. Rae  
RBC Foundation  
Scotiabank

#### PATRON GIFTS

(\$10,000 TO \$99,999)  
Anonymous  
Ada Holding Company  
Ms. Bluma Appel  
Mr. A. Charles Bailie  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert and Mona Bandeen  
E.W. Bickle Foundation  
J.P. Bickell Foundation  
Mr. Robert W. Corcoran  
The D. & T. Davis Charitable Foundation  
Mr. Mark J. Feldman  
Christopher George Fleming Foundation  
Mr. & Mrs. André and Suzanne Galpeault  
Mr. Gary J. Gartner  
Mr. & Mrs. Colin and Sherrill Graham  
Mrs. Claudia Hepburn  
The Charles H. Ivey Foundation  
Mr. Donald and Murray MacKenzie  
The McLean Foundation  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank and Mary Jean Potter  
Mr. Neville Poy  
Mr. & Mrs. Rennie and Jennie Regehr  
Mr. & Mrs. Simon and Lynne Scott  
The Carolyn Sifton Foundation  
Ms. Dianne Werner and Dr. Peter Simon  
Ms. Catharina van Berkel  
Ms. Cynthia Wine and Mr. Philip Slayton  
The W. Garfield Weston Foundation  
Ms. Donna J. Wood

The Royal Conservatory gratefully acknowledges all donations. However, only gifts of \$10,000 and above are listed here.

273 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, ON Canada M5S 1W2  
Tel 416.408.2824 Fax 416.516.7637  
[www.rcmusic.ca](http://www.rcmusic.ca)



THE ROYAL  
CONSERVATORY OF  
MUSIC

## Media literate kids pick top TV program

Do Canadian kids watch a lot of TV? That's not necessarily a bad thing. It could mean they're doing homework. If they've learned how to deconstruct a program through one of the media literacy units presented by Learning Through the Arts, it's certain they're watching television in a whole new way.

And for 18 LTTA classes chosen from all regions of Canada, they're not just sitting in class learning about media literacy, they're also sitting on a national jury that chooses the winner of the \$50,000 Shaw Rocket Prize for a kid's television program.

While media literacy courses are beginning to be offered more often in Canadian schools, the units designed with Learning Through the Arts show a clear record of success. The key is LTTA's approach to engaging both students and teachers.

"Kids are thrilled with this," says Sheena Robertson, an experienced filmmaker who manages media literacy projects for LTTA. Their excitement is partly due to the hands-on aspect of LTTA's media literacy classes, she explains.

In the digital age, media tools have never been more accessible.

"The kids have access to kinds of equipment that was unheard of: cameras and recorders that can zoom, computers they can edit on. It's so easy now to use a digital video camera, download it and do some editing — and it adds a practical component to the project. Kids are excited by technology, and because they watch so much television, they have the opportunity to use the art form in addition to critiquing it. It's very exciting for them."

As with other LTTA teaching programs, an artist — in this case someone with a background in film or television arts — partners with an educator to help students understand the components of different media.

"It's a new area for many teachers," Robertson says, "so this is a really nice partnership. And part of the program is that this is professional development for teachers — that's part of the LTTA philosophy."

Before long students are sampling media in the classroom and sharing their thoughts on camera angles, editing, even product placement in what they're watching.

"Last year," Robertson says, "in a Grade 9 classroom, we had kids look at design elements — at camera angles, at what the director's perspective was, the way things were done, really pulling it apart. Pacing, music, image, what kind of casting is done."

"We were in an inner-city school in Toronto and we asked them: 'Do you see yourselves represented in these shows? Is this important?' When you understand how the choices are made in a program, then you can ask why the producers make those choices: 'What is their purpose in doing that?' LTTA's media literacy units are about creating critical thinkers — that's really important. It's critical thinking and also fun with something new for all involved — the artist, the teacher and the students."

Some welcome fuel for the LTTA media literacy initiative has been provided by an independent, non-profit corporation called The Shaw Rocket Fund, which promotes and helps pay for quality Canadian children's programming. (Contributors to The Shaw Rocket Fund include Shaw Communications, Shaw Cablesystems, EastLink Cablesystems and Delta Cable.) The fund has created an annual prize of \$50,000 for children's programming.

Last year, LTTA students selected *Degrassi: The Next Generation*.

"It's fantastic to be judged and honoured by our audience," said series creator and executive producer, Linda Schuyler, a former teacher.

Now in its second year, a panel of international industry leaders will once again vet programs, and then pass their top choices on to a national LTTA student jury. This year, that means 375 English, French and Aboriginal students in Grades 4 and 5 will judge programs aimed at them. All are students who are being exposed to media literacy through Learning Through the Arts.

"When we came across the Learning Through the Arts program, we just thought it was a perfect fit," says Agnes Augustin, CEO of the Calgary-based Shaw Rocket Fund. "This is a great idea — it helps bring media literacy into the schools and LTTA creates a great environment for us. We let kids assess the programs, review them and make their own decisions as to what they think is the best. They're an informed jury because of the work they've done through Learning Through the Arts."

This year's winner will be announced May 3. Further information is available at [www.rocketfund.ca](http://www.rocketfund.ca).



Artist Michelle Silagy leads a Grade 5 math class at Gosford Public School in Toronto.

## Teachers extend horizons

ARTS / continued from page 1

"We are not trying to make them teachers," Ms. Houser says. "We try to give them the basics of classroom management and an understanding of curriculum."

The program for training artists continues to expand. This is the first year of a countrywide effort that takes the training beyond the class-

room to prepare them for leadership roles within the organization. These Level 2 participants get more on-the-job training and give demonstrations to colleagues, teachers and other artists who may be interested.

Artists who progress through Level 3, such as Ms. Houser, who recently visited Portugal, travel to help start pilot programs internationally and take the message to organi-

zations such as UNESCO.

LTTA is working toward a certification program for artists. One of the guiding principles is that teaching should be a partnership between the artist and the teacher so that the teacher becomes a full participant rather than standing back while someone else teaches her class.

Often, teachers are taking a risk and going "beyond their comfort zone,"

Ms. Houser says, which stretches them to become better educators.

Back in the Gosford math class, the teacher is extending his horizons. While Silagy is a pro at using her body to illustrate the "upside-down polygon" on the gym floor, generalist teacher Patrick Austin is being a good sport and giving it his best try.

The 30-year-old teacher seems a bit shy in his "duet" with Silagy; she

guides him around one corner of the gym to the moving sounds of Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*.

But the children are loving it. And that is the whole point.

"You encourage kids when you lead by example and that means you have to do it yourself," Austin says. "I'm not a dancer, but seeing me do it builds their confidence."

This is especially important for children who may lack the courage to try new things. "For the ones who feel nervous, seeing me do it helps empower them to try."

Austin has participated in the LTTA program throughout his four years at Gosford and in that time he says he has definitely seen improvements in test results when it comes to lessons in measuring.

"Math is one of those things that kids can see as just a burden, but using dance helps bring it alive," he says. "When kids are focused and enthusiastic, the sky's the limit."

Working with the artists has also helped him be a better art and dance instructor when those classes fall to him.

Helping the artists learn and grow is also a goal.

Silagy, a choreographer and independent dance artist, has worked extensively with LTTA schools throughout Ontario as well as travelling with LTTA to Alberta and Manitoba. She feels she has helped children learn, but has also learned from them.

"Sharing movement in any context with youth gives me the conviction to experience art as essential to living," she says. "Working with the spontaneity of youth influences my artistic choices and aspirations to be fresh and unencumbered when creating."

She also enjoys the chance to share ideas with teachers and other artists in the LTTA program and has developed as a communicator. "Working alongside educators has honed my collaborative skills," she says. "And it requires that I enter into new environments."

Acuity Funds Ltd.  
is proud to support  
*Learning Through the Arts*



"We recognize the significant impact that music and the arts can have on developing young minds."

We congratulate The Royal Conservatory of Music for creating *Learning Through the Arts* and implementing this program in schools across Canada."

Ian O. Ihnatowycz  
President and CEO

Transforming our future, one mind at a time.

ACUITY  
FUNDS LTD

## the sweet sound of music

We are proud to play a part in making the future friendly for The Royal Conservatory of Music and in thousands of Learning Through the Arts classrooms across Canada.



 **TELUS®**  
the future is friendly®