



# Di (Steven) Zhai

ASPIRING PERFORMER AND EDUCATOR

## Education

### *University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario)*

September 2024 - April 2026

#### **Master of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy**

- Studying in the piano studio of Dr. Megan Chang.
- Includes teaching practicums and research studies.

### *University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario)*

September 2021 - April 2024

#### **Piano Pedagogy Certificate**

- Took specific courses and a practicum to become familiar with piano pedagogy methods.

### *University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario)*

September 2020 - April 2024

#### **Bachelor of Music Education**

- Studied in the piano studio of Dr. Megan Chang.
- Graduated with Honours

## Work Experiences

### *University of Toronto Piano Pedagogy Program Assistant Teacher and Instructor (Toronto, Ontario)*

**University of Toronto**      September 2023 - PRESENT

- Currently a Teaching Assistant and Private Lesson Instructor.
- Was asked in my last year of undergrad to fill the role that is reserved for graduate students.
- Current responsibilities include greeting parents, supervising students, picking up/dropping off students, checking homework, classroom management, classroom set up/clean up, one-on-one help, lesson prep, leading activities, and facilitating one-on-one private lessons.

### *Assistant Music Teacher Internship (Markham, Ontario)*

**Unionville High School**      September 2023 - December 2023

- I helped run a wind ensemble comprising over 100 students ranging from grade 9 to grade 12, some of whom are in the Arts Unionville program.
- Responsibilities include set up/clean up of the classroom, routine organization, lesson planning, classroom management, supervision of students, providing detailed comments/notes, one-on-one help, sectional rehearsal, lead warmups, assisting students, and any other work that is needed.

## Profile

I am a dedicated and determined pianist who is constantly improving my craft one note at a time. Current interests include piano performance, music research, anime piano music, and pedagogy.

## Professional Association

### *Ontario Registered Music Teacher Association*

April 2026-present

### *Canadian Federation Music Teacher Association*

April 2026-present

## *Assistant Music Teacher Co Op (Markham, Ontario)*

**Coledale Public School**

February 2020 - March 2020

- I worked with students from kindergarten to eighth grade as well as those who had a variety of special needs during my time. These include students with developmental and learning disabilities.
- This position lasted only two months due to the Covid pandemic shutdown.
- Responsibilities include leading classes, conducting, lesson planning, class preparation, instrument assessment, taking attendance, providing extra help, performing office work, classroom management, supervising students, lunchtime monitoring, recess duty, clean up, set up, and many more.

## *Self-Employed Piano Teacher and Theory Tutor (Markham, Ontario)*

**Self-Employed**

September 2018 - PRESENT

- Currently teaching piano, providing piano coaching, and theory tutoring.
- Occasionally help with substitute teaching at various music schools.

## **Awards**

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### *Ontario Music Festival Concerto Competition 3<sup>rd</sup> place*

June 2025

- Came in third place within my grouping for the advanced Concerto Class.
- Received a small monetary scholarship of \$250.

### *Peel Music Festival Concerto Competition 1st place*

April 2025

- Came in first place within my grouping for the advanced Concerto Class.
- Qualified for provincials.

### *Kiwanis Music Festival Concerto Competition 2nd place*

February 2025

- Came in second place within my grouping for the adult Concerto Class.
- Qualified for provincials.

### *Unionville Music Festival Open Category 1st Place*

December 2024

- Came in first place within my grouping for the Open Category.

### *Unionville Music Festival Concerto Competition 1st Place*

December 2024

- Came in first place within my grouping for the Concerto Class.
- Qualified for provincials

### *CCC International Music Festival Concerto Competition 2nd Place*

November 2024

- Came in second place within my grouping for the Open Concerto Class.

### *Patricia and Peter Shannon Wilson Undergraduate Research Prize*

May 2024

- Recipient of a research prize award from the University of Toronto Libraries.
- The purpose of this prize is to showcase and award students' effective and innovative use of information sources and the development of their understanding of what it means to be information literate in the 21st century.

### ***Swee Kim Ang Memorial Scholarship***

August 2023

- Recipient of a scholarship award from the University of Toronto Faculty of Music.
- To be awarded to an outstanding student pursuing a music education degree, with a preference for a student whose primary instrument is piano.

### ***Kiwanis Music Festival 3rd Place***

February 2023

- Came in third place within my grouping for the Open Classical Chopin Major Work category.

### ***Jean A. Chalmers Scholarship***

July 2021

- Recipient of a scholarship award from the University of Toronto Faculty of Music.
- Awarded to outstanding students in the second or higher year of any full-time program.

### ***Anna Margaret Wallace and William Alexander McCoy Scholarships***

September 2020

- Recipient of a scholarship award from the University of Toronto Faculty of Music.
- To be awarded as merit-based scholarships for incoming first-year students at the Faculty of Music.

### ***Jazz Band Most Valuable Player Award***

June 2020

- Recipient of an award from the Unionville high school music department.

### ***Ontario Scholar Award***

June 2020

- Achieved an average mark of at least 80% in any six Grade 12 courses.

### ***Royal Conservatory of Music Gold Medalist (Level 9)***

November 2019

- Given to the top pianists in the province of Ontario each year due to receiving the highest exam mark.

### ***Drama Achievement Award***

September 2019

- Given to one student for their achievement and dedication to the dramatic arts.

### ***First Class Honours with Distinction Level 9 Music History***

February 2019

- Received a score of 98% on the level 9 RCM music history exam.

### ***Canadian History Achievement Award***

September 2018

- Given to one student for their achievement and dedication to Canadian history.

### ***Ontario Band Association Musician Leadership Award***

February 2018

- Given to one student in each band that demonstrated leadership and dedication to music.

## **Publications**

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### ***Anime Music, The Piano And Animenz***

June 2024

- Published on TSpace, an open research repository.
- This was the product of my 9 months of research on Anime Music, Anime Piano Music and Animenz made public.

# Research Projects

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## *Anime Piano Tales: Imaginative Storytelling Through Music* September 2025 - March 2026

- Conducted research into storytelling among elementary-level piano students under the supervision of Professor Midori Koga.
- This project specifically focuses on Studio Ghibli piano arrangements and observing if students can match musical gestures to elements from their assigned film.
- The final product was a paper.

## *Anime Piano Music: Performance Practices and Pedagogical Considerations with Young Adult Pianists* September 2024 - May 2025

- Researched and analyzed Anime Piano Music and the arrangements of Animenz under the supervision of Professor Midori Koga.
- The specific emphasis of this research project is the potential pedagogical application of possible performance practices associated with Anime Piano Music and Animenz.
- The final products are lecture recital and a paper.

## *Anime Music, The Piano And Animenz: An Exploration of a New and Emerging Genre of Music* August 2023 - June 2024

- Researched and analyzed Anime Music, Anime Piano Music and the arrangements of Animenz under the supervision of Professor Norbert Palej. These topics are devoid of academic scholarship, meaning that this is likely the first or one of the first projects of its kind in the music academic realm.
- This project involved the Ethics Review Board at the University of Toronto as well as members of the piano faculty. Notable highlights included an interview with Animenz and a piano faculty-wide survey.
- The final products include a 186-page paper, a website, a presentation at the undergraduate research showcase and a public presentation.

# Public Presentations and Show Case

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## *Faculty of Music Research Showcase* February 2026

- Created a research poster and presented my research on Anime Piano Music at the University of Toronto Edward Johnson Building.

## *CFMTA Student Presentation Competition* July 2025

- Gave a 30-minute presentation at the Canadian Federation of Music Teacher Association Conference in Montreal at the École de musique Vincent-d'Indy

## *Anime Piano Music Lecture Recital* May 2025

- Gave a 1-hour lecture recital at the University of Toronto Walter Hall regarding my research on this topic.

## *Faculty of Music Research Showcase* March 2025

- Created a research poster and presented my research on Anime Piano Music at the University of Toronto Edward Johnson Building.

## *Anime Piano Music Public Presentation* April 2024

- Gave a 1-hour public presentation on my research on Anime Piano Music at the University of Toronto Edward Johnson Building.

## *Faculty of Music Undergraduate Research Showcase* April 2024

- Created a research poster and presented my research on Anime Piano Music at the University of Toronto Edward Johnson Building.

# Adjudication and Masterclass Experiences

## *Adjudicator - UTPPP Music Festival*

University of Toronto

March 2025

- This festival is organized by the University of Toronto Pedagogy Program.
- Responsibilities include writing comments, adjudicating and facilitating a live masterclass workshop with each participant.

## *Adjudicator - UTPPP Music Festival*

University of Toronto

March 2024

- This festival is organized by the University of Toronto Pedagogy Program.
- Responsibilities include writing comments, adjudicating and facilitating a live masterclass workshop with each participant.

## Performance Experiences



\*Upcoming confirmed performances

### *Masters Graduating Recital\**

Walter Hall

April 2026

### *Piano Recital\**

Delmanor Retirement home

April 2026

### *Piano Recital\**

Bradgate Arms Retirement home

March 2026

### *Massey Concert Series\**

Massey College

March 2026

### *Piano Masterclass with Steven Philcox*

Edward Johnson Building

March 2026

### *Massey Concert Series*

Massey College

March 2026

### *Piano Recital*

Bradgate Arms Retirement home

February 2026

### *Piano Masterclass with Steven Philcox*

Edward Johnson Building

February 2026

### *Instrumentalis*

Walter Hall

January 2026

### *Piano Recital*

Bradgate Arms Retirement home

January 2026

### *Piano Masterclass with Jaime Parker*

Edward Johnson Building

January 2026

### *Piano Fest*

Walter Hall

November 2025

### *Instrumentalis*

Walter Hall

November 2025

### *Piano Masterclass with Pedja Mužijević*

Walter Hall

November 2025

### *Piano Recital*

Bradgate Arms Retirement Home

October 2025

### *Piano Masterclass with Jaime Parker*

Edward Johnson Building

September 2025

### *CFMTA Student Presentation Competition*

École de musique Vincent-d'Indy

July 2025

### *Ontario Music Festival Concerto Competition*

Wilfried Laurier University Faculty of Music

June 2025

### *Anime Piano Music Lecture Recital*

University of Toronto Walter Hall

May 2025

### *Peel music Festival Concerto Competition*

St Andrew Presbyterian Church

April 2025

### *Piano Recital*

Bradgate Arms Retirement home

April 2025

### *Kiwanis Music Festival Concerto Competition*

Chinese Cultural Centre

February 2025

### *University of Toronto Concerto Competition (First Round)*

Edward Johnson Building

January 2025

# Performance Experiences

<i>Unionville Music Festival</i> <b>St Matthew United Church</b>	December 2024
<i>End of Term Recital</i> <b>Briton House</b>	December 2024
<i>Unionville Music Festival Concerto Competition</i> <b>Inspire Music Academy</b>	December 2024
<i>Piano Performance</i> <b>Briton House</b>	November 2024
<i>CCC Toronto International Music Festival Concerto Competition</i> <b>Chinese Cultural Centre</b>	November 2024
<i>Elizabeth And Steven's Joint Graduating Recital</i> <b>Lawrence Park Community Church</b>	May 2024
<i>Studio Class Recital</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	April 2024
<i>Piano Fete</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	April 2024
<i>Piano Recital</i> <b>Richmond Hill Retirement Residence</b>	February 2024
<i>Piano Recital</i> <b>Bradgate Arms Retirement Home</b>	January 2024
<i>FMUA Benefit Concert</i> <b>Walter Hall</b>	November 2023
<i>Elizabeth And Steven's Joint Independent Recital</i> <b>Lawrence Park Community Church</b>	May 2023
<i>North York Music Festival</i> <b>Lawrence Park Community Church</b>	April 2023
<i>University of Toronto Piano MasterClass with Charlotte Tang</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	April 2023
<i>Studio Class Recital</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	April 2023
<i>Piano Fete</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	April 2023
<i>FMUA Studio Favourites</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	April 2023

\*Upcoming confirmed performances

<i>Piano Recital</i> <b>Bradgate Arms Retirement Home</b>	March 2023
<i>Piano Recital</i> <b>Elgin Mills Delmanor Retirement Home</b>	February 2023
<i>Kiwanis Music Festival</i> <b>Chinese Cultural Centre</b>	February 2023
<i>Piano Performance</i> <b>Hazelton Place Retirement Home</b>	November 2022
<i>Studio Class Recital</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	April 2022
<i>Studio Class Recital</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	April 2021
<i>Unionville High School Online Fundraising Concert</i> <b>Virtual performance due to the Covid pandemic</b>	May 2020
<i>University of Toronto Piano MasterClass with Lydia Wong</i> <b>Edward Johnson Building</b>	October 2019
<i>Music Alive Festival</i> <b>Cosmopolitan Music Hall</b>	April 2019
<i>Animenz Composition and Piano MasterClass</i> <b>Gallery 345 Live Music Venue</b>	March 2018
<i>Winter Talent Show</i> <b>Markham Flato Theatre</b>	December 2017