

## **The Lady of Mystery Reveals Some Introspections**

by Alison Cole for *BMused*, the UBC Music Undergraduate Students' Association newsletter

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If you're worried that no one will be going to your recital, you can be at least sure that one person won't let you down. And that's the elusive, yet ever friendly and helpful Miss. A.

Handing out programmes and attending as many student concerts and recitals as possible (and assisting with receptions where required) is a favorite and very important pastime for the 'lady of mystery', and she has been involved in music for most of her life.

But why does she do it? The answer is simple - as simple as it should be for any lover of music. "Because I enjoy being with the musicians."

Though she isn't here doing her B.Mus. degree and being forced live and breath music every day of her life, one might wonder what exactly it is she gets out of music. "Oh, I get a lot out of it," she says with a lowering of her voice and forceful breathiness.

"Enjoyment. It's just important to me."

And UBC is definitely the place to be for Miss. A, a place that carves a clear juxtaposition to her otherwise serious life as being a part of the legal world. When she isn't at the music school, supporting us student musicians, she works five hours per week as a freelance legal stenographer.

"[Music is] a complete change, as far as I'm concerned," she says, "from legal stenography, from the legal field, and from the commercial field, from the mundane things of life." She would like a change from this work though, and says her preferential job would be as a receptionist.

Every March 15, as you may know, there's a special celebration going on in the city, and that's Miss. A's Ides of March party. It's something that she just decided to do, and now, ten years later, the Ides still lives on. She invites all music students, professors and other



personal friends. It is strictly a social occasion, and in the most recent years, has been taking place at the Vine Yard Restaurant.

And if you're wondering what exactly Miss. A drank at this year's Ides of March celebration, here's the official list: she started with a double gin and tonic, then 7 vodka martinis, followed by a partially shared bottle of Chardonnay, and finally Tia Maria and Grand Marnier.

"It's the students I really enjoy," she says of her company at the Ides. She loves them all, but tries not to have any favorites, though she says some of them do seem well disposed to her. The students, she says, are "wonderful".

"They are the School of Music. Without the students, there would be no School of Music. Without them the School could not continue to function and I think it would be good for everyone to bear that in mind. Without them, some people would not have their jobs. The students are also a lot of fun."

"My deep regret is, the public are not aware of the [student] recitals. And some members of the public who are aware of them, they don't come because, I can only assume, they think something that's free isn't any good. It's the greatest mistake anyone could make." Well said, Miss. A!

Miss. A recalls an incident when she attended a 'professional' saxophone recital, which she didn't like. The next day, she attended another recital by two saxophone students, which she loved. And she gave each of the students a dollar, because she had enjoyed their playing.

"The students need audiences. They are so full of enthusiasm and are really trying to do a good job... and they do do it. I appreciate that because I'm a very enthusiastic person myself," she says. "Well-known artistes who are so sure of their position do not always show the same enthusiasm."



As one may have guessed, Miss. A's favorite type of music is classical. She especially loves Chopin and the romantics in general, as well as most of the classical composers. She loves opera and operetta too, and occasionally listens to jazz, when the jazz ensemble is playing a concert.

“When I turn up at those, sometimes [jazz professor] Fred Stride will say to me ‘What are you doing here?! You won’t like it!’”, she says, adding that she can take jazz in small doses.

In contrast to her love for the classics, Miss. A doesn’t enjoy rock nor electronic music; she has extremely acute hearing and can’t take loud volume and percussiveness. So if you see Miss. A covering her ears at your recital while sitting in her favorite seat, be informed that this is not an insult to your music!

I ask her why exactly she always has to sit in that certain seat in the Recital Hall, which she always pre-reserves with a special ‘Reserved’ card. “Because I like it!” is her reply. “And when I do leave this plane of existence, which I hope won’t be for a very long time, I’d like to still be there. I’d like to come back haunting and floating around the music school, but without frightening anyone.”

And one of these days, you can probably expect to see the music lady wearing one half red, and one half blue of her two favorite dresses. She boldly asserts that she has considered doing this one day, and will possibly do it in the near future, but only at the reception after a recital (and not during the recital).

“The students understand me,” she says. And you certainly wouldn’t be surprised at whatever she might do!

And some additional nuggets of information:

Top 2 Favourite Vancouver Hangouts:  
UBC Recital Hall  
Vine Yard Restaurant

Will you ever reveal your real name?  
“I prefer being a lady of mystery.”

Where do you buy your make-up from?  
“Mostly it is given by friends, by otherwise from Shoppers DrugMart.”

Favorite dress - the red or the blue?  
“The blue.”