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Music alumnus bringing it all back home

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Special to Western News

Don Wright Faculty of Music alumnus Adam Scime, BMus'07, MMus'09, recently presented his new composition, *Liminal Pathways*, performed by ECM+ musical ensemble, at Western Music's von Kuster Hall.

It's a feeling of coming full circle for Don Wright Faculty of Music alumnus Adam Scime, BMus'07, MMus'09, as his new composition, *Liminal Pathways*, was performed recently by ECM+ musical ensemble at Western Music's von Kuster Hall.

"Some of the first pieces I ever wrote were written here at Western," said Scime, one of four composers selected to participate in ECM+'s *Generation 2016*, a national competition and cross-country tour for Canadian composers under the age of 35. "I feel an enormous sense of accomplishment to come back to Western in this way, and with this ensemble. It's surreal."

The Hamilton, Ont., native first picked up a violin at the age of 5. Piano and double bass quickly followed. All are instruments he still plays today. As a young teenager, Scime had a strong feeling music would become his life – he just didn't know what form it would take. It was during his undergraduate degree at Western it began to take the shape of music composition.

"Coming out of high school, I had a very strong creative side to my musicality. But I didn't really know how I would express that. It was only through studying composition I came to realize it was simply an extension of my musicality," he said. "I still perform – a lot. But writing music is a mode of expression that works very well for me. It's important to find a way to express yourself that works the best for you."

Scime credits his teachers, particularly Music professor Paul Frehner, with pointing him in the right direction and giving him the motivation to make a career out of music.

"Paul is a big mentor for me and was a very important person in my development. He is insistent on excellence and made me realize that you have to work hard and you have to have a certain amount of excellence to what you do if you want to make it as a professional. You can be creative, and that's great, but it has to be good. In the most positive way possible, this was one of the most valuable lessons I've ever learned – from anybody."

In 2009, Scime moved to Toronto after graduating with his master's degree in music composition. Since, he successfully launched a career as a composer and freelance double bass performer. He's been praised as a "fantastic success" by CBC and has received numerous awards, including the 2015 CMC Toronto Emerging Composer Award, Socan Young Composer Competition, Karen Keiser Prize in Canadian Music and Esprit Young Composer Competition.

His music has been performed and commissioned by many renowned ensembles and soloists including the Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne, Esprit Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Gryphon Trio, New Music Concerts, Soundstreams, Bicycle Opera Project, l'Orchestre de la Francophonie, Véronique Mathieu, Nadina Mackie Jackson and Carla Huhtanen, among others.

This year's ECM+ *Generation 2016* tour, which stopped in nine Canadian cities, including London, over a two-week period this fall with conductor Véronique Lacroix and 10 ECM+ musicians, is another honour to add to the growing list.

"ECM+ is one of the most important ensembles in Canada. They are very prominent. For a composer of any age to have nine performances of a piece is remarkable. It's a big deal. There's nothing like it in the world really, let alone Canada," Scime said.

Although the competition features a \$5,000 jury award and \$1,500 audience choice award, Scime said the experience, and opportunity to spend an intensive period of time learning from fellow esteemed composers is the real prize. "We've all done a lot of hard work to get here and we have such respect for one another."

Thanks to recent renovations, Western's Music Building may have changed significantly in the years since Scime spent hours studying and composing within its walls, but, his direction hasn't.

"It's a very good feeling to come back here and know that I'm still doing what I set out to do."

Scime is in the final years of a PhD in music composition at the University of Toronto and plans to explore opportunities in academia when he graduates.