



Featuring the award-winning Live at Massey Hall films, these free films offer insight into the Canadian music scene, with behind the scenes interviews with artists, stellar performances, plus short curriculum connected guides with pre- and post-viewing activities for select films. Activities can be completed synchronously or asynchronously, in-school or at-home.

*Suggested age: Secondary school, some concerts contain explicit language. See specific details, notes, and highlights in the "Concert Highlights" section below.*

## **EMILY HAINES AND THE SOFT SKELETON**



Emily Haines, performing under the moniker *Emily Haines & the Soft Skeleton*, is a Canadian singer, keyboardist, and songwriter. Her performances, especially in this film, feature theatricality, which adds to her electrifying performance. The genres she has created music for are widespread, including indie rock, new wave, synth-pop, and more. One of her top collaborators is James Shaw, with whom she produced music together as a band called Metric. As a part of that Canadian rock band, Emily provides the lead vocals and some instrumental work. Emily had followed in her parents' artistic footsteps. As a child, she grew up in a home with experimental art and freedom of musical expression from her parents, one of which is Canadian poet Paul Haines.

## **TALKING POINTS**

This film opens up a bit differently than the other films in this series. There is no jump into the music. Instead, it uses a skit of Emily in a 'just waking up' scenario to open the show. Why do you think this type of opening was chosen, and why does it work? What message does this kind of opening send?

After the first song, an all-knowing narrative voice comes out speaking to Emily. Have you heard this kind of all-knowing voice in other types of performances? Have you seen it in the film? What is the purpose of this voice?

Emily aims to reach a new level of emotional rawness for her music for the soft skeleton project. What emotions do you think each song is projecting? When you make music, what effect do your emotions have in the process? When you listen to music, how does that affect your emotions?

Emily Haines is also a part of the band Metric; however, the music is quite different from the music in the film. Listen to a few Metric songs; what are the differences between the two projects Emily works on? Are there any similarities other than the fact that Emily sings in both?



## **CONCERT HIGHLIGHTS AND NOTES**

**0-0:40** Talking about landmark moments at Massey  
**15:04-15:31** Talking about the soft skeleton project vs Metric

## ACTIVITY 1

Use [www.pickerwheel.com](http://www.pickerwheel.com) and enter at least five words for different emotions. Spin the wheel and use that as a prompt to write a song. This prompt can either influence the lyrics or the key and sound of the song.

## ACTIVITY 2

Certain sections of the song Minefield of Memory, including the opening, feature instrumental accompaniment that does not harmonize with the lyrics. Instead, they play in unison with the singer. The unison is both in rhythm and pitch. This repetition then transitions as the song goes on with more variation between the two. Try this in a simple song you know with a partner (ex. Twinkle Twinkle, Mary had a little lamb, other primary songs like this). One person will sing, and another can hum or play an instrument. How will you transition from unison to harmony? What will you do to have variation between you and your partner?

## ACTIVITY 3

The song Legend of the Wild Horse was written as a parable about escaping “requirements of civilized life.” (A parable is a simplistic story often used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson and features human characters usually.) Write your parable or find an example of one online and write a song based on that parable.

## ACTIVITY 4

In the song The Fatal Gift, the lyric “And you own it, and it owns you” repeats during the second half of the song. The song stays interesting as the music uses instrumental breaks and modulation in the way the lyric is sung. Try this technique on your own! Write an intro to a song and choose a short lyric to repeat. Try different ways to sing the same lyric or add any instrumental support to keep it interesting. Make a list of all the different techniques you can use to sing the same lyric.



## STAFF INTERVIEW Mima Agozzino, Communications Manager

- *What is your role at Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall?*

Communications Manager

- *How did you get into the world of Communications?*

I went to Ryerson's Radio & Television Arts program and won a scholarship in my graduating year with MuchMusic / CHUM Television where I got to pick any department to intern and shadow with and I chose Communications & PR.

- *Tell us more about your education, career path, and interests?*

After interning at MuchMusic, I was hired on and spent 8 amazing years there. While working as a publicist there, I met a lot of great people throughout the music industry and this networking landed me a job at Universal Music Canada (UMC). During my 10 years at Universal, I went from being a publicist through being promoted to Director of Communications. After this incredible gig, an opportunity to work here at Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall was presented and I was thrilled to accept. I've been here for 4 great years.

- *How were you involved in Emily Haines & the Soft Skeleton Live at Massey Hall?*

In my role as Communications Manager, I often liaise with artist's publicists, managers or agents to draft a press release and try to get as much media attention as possible. In this case, Emily Haine's team was super helpful and we were able to garner some advance show coverage and post show reviews.

- *Who do you work with at the Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall?*

The nature of my job, I have to connect with pretty much all of the departments here at the Halls. Communications is often considered a "service role" as the goal is to amplify all of the exciting things that this organization is working on – and ultimately spread the news through to the media.

- *What is some advice you have for someone interested in pursuing a career in Communications?*

Perhaps the best advice I was given while in university was, to not be afraid of reaching out to organizations or people that you really admire. Find out what it takes to get there. Research these companies, cold call, ask to arrange for a coffee or quick phone chat. It eventually works!

- *What is your favourite part of your job?*

I am a huge fan of both Halls and have been especially enamoured by Massey Hall since I was a teenager. It has such an incredible history and I pinch myself whenever I get to steal a special quiet moment in the empty auditorium and look way up at the beautiful ceiling.

- *What is your favourite memory of the Halls?*

My favourite memory and first time at Massey Hall was watching Sigur Ros perform there for the first time in early 2000s (maybe 2003?).

My favourite memory of Roy Thomson Hall is going to see live shows with my parents as a kid to watch their favourite artists.

