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BU music alum joins Toronto symphony

By: Colin Slark

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An alumnus of Brandon University's School of Music has landed his first big position in the orchestral world.

Jesse Dietschi, who obtained both a bachelor of music and a master of music degree at BU, is the new principal bassist for Sinfonia Toronto.



Sinfonia is a 15-piece chamber string orchestra in its 21st season. The group plays primarily in Ontario and Quebec, but has also toured internationally.

While Dietschi has played with orchestras before, this is his first permanent position with one.

"When you start venturing out into the world of taking professional orchestra auditions, it's not uncommon for some musicians to take 20-30 auditions before they end up winning one," Dietschi told the Sun over the phone.

"It's a very challenging circuit that people spend a lot of time and money pursuing," he added.

While Dietschi said that some auditions can take a whole day as people are slowly eliminated from contention over several rounds, he said that auditioning for Sinfonia only went for a single round.

Another divergence from the norm was that where normally rehearsals are announced two or three months in advance, he only had three weeks to prepare for Sinfonia.

The bassist credits his education at BU for helping him get where he is today.

"Honestly, I think that if I had not gone to Brandon University, I would not be an orchestral bass player right now," Dietschi said.

He added that the small class sizes at BU allowed him to branch out from his study focus on jazz to play in some orchestral groups.

"Brandon gave me that initial opportunity that kind of got me started on that path," Dietschi said.

Dietschi has yet to perform or rehearse with the group because they went on a Japanese tour after he was hired but before he could join the group.

Next week might be a trial by fire of sorts as Dietschi will meet up with his new colleagues for the first time as they get ready for a performance at Toronto's George Weston Hall on Oct. 18.

The orchestra will be playing works by composers Paganini and Dvorak.

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