

Art has the power to inspire. The power to heal, the power to transform, to rehabilitate, to bear witness and to make us believe that there are better days ahead.

— Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada



Vigour Projects
8000 Bathurst St. Unit 1
PO Box 30085
Vaughn, ON L4J 0B0
www.vigourprojects.com

David A. Alter, M.D., Ph.D., F.R.C.P.C.
Founder & President, Vigour Projects
david@vigourprojects.com / 416 275 2984

Who we are

Vigour Projects' mission is to improve health through music. We are driven by the belief that music can both directly, and indirectly, improve the health of individuals, communities, and populations, and are devoted to finding methods of achieving this most effectively and efficiently.

Vigour Projects plans, organizes, implements, and evaluates music-based projects that are targeted towards the improvement of health – the nature of each project is dependent upon the needs of each charity /foundation that we are partnering with.

Each project is designed to meet the needs or specific health issue of the partnering charity, however, it will generally consist of several main components: a music-based project or intervention, a song, a video, a research paper, a website, and an event. Vigour Projects will use these components to generate funds for the partnering charity, specifically for a cause that is in line with our mission to improve health through music.

Brief organizational history

Vigour Projects was originally founded in 2008 as Vigour Records, an online initiative that bridged music and health. In early 2010, Vigour Records narrowed its focus and decided the best way to mark this fairly uncharted territory was to become a music project-based organization, in which music supports each project directly, rather than simply being used to generate funds for each partnering charity. Thus, the name changed from Vigour Records to Vigour Projects.

Board of Directors

David A. Alter, Founder, President, Physician and Musician

Darius Bägli, Physician and Musician

Mark Weinstock, Physician and Musician

Edwin Gailits, Documentary Filmmaker

Charity Partner

Heart & Stroke Foundation of Ontario

Key Partners

MaRS Social Innovation Generation

Number 9 Audio Group

Lynk PR

Toronto Vegetarian Association

Cosmo Music

The Founder

David Alter, MD, PhD, FRCPC

Dr. David Alter is a cardiologist and researcher in Toronto, Canada. He is a Senior Scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, the Research Director of the Cardiac Rehabilitation and Secondary Prevention Program and a Scientist at Toronto Rehab and an Adjunct Scientist at the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute of St. Michaels' Hospital. Dr. Alter is an Associate Professor with the Department of Medicine at the University of Toronto. His cross appointments include Senior Scientist in the Clinical Epidemiology and Health Services Research Program at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, and Associate Professor in the Department of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto. Dr. Alter's research interests extend across many disciplines, including social behavioural engagement for population health interventions, chronic vascular disease management, cardiovascular health services and outcomes research. Dr. Alter has over 100 peer-reviewed scholarly publications, many of which have been published in leading medical journals (e.g., New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of American Medical Association). He has also received over \$17,000,000 in peer-reviewed funding as principal and/or co-investigator. Dr. Alter is also a singer-songwriter and has written over 700 songs, some of which have placed as finalists or semi-finalists in international award competitions



Music has the power to heal us as individuals, and embrace us as communities. I can think of no greater or more fulfilling aspiration than one that strives to improve the health of this world through music. It is this passionate aspiration that carries me forward everyday in my life.

—David A Alter

(i.e., the U.K. Songwriting contest). He has received radio-play in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and in many countries throughout Europe with such songs as “Legend in the world (Jesse James)”, “Take me home”, and “I’m rolling in it”. Dr. Alter is the Founder and President of Vigour Projects, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve the health of populations through music. Dr. Alter is also the Chief Scientific Director of InterxVent Canada. Dr. Alter is a Career Investigator with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

Board of Directors

Dr. Darius Bägli, Physician and Musician

Dr. Darius Bägli was recruited back to Canada from the United States to initiate a new direction in the evolution of the Pediatric Urology Division at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and to create a basic research sphere of activity within the division.

Dr. Bägli trained in Medicine at McGill University and in Urology at Harvard Medical School and became a member of the surgical staff at SickKids and the Department of Surgery, University of Toronto, in 1995. He currently oversees a busy clinical practice in paediatric urology and reconstructive surgery in children. He is a Professor of Surgery at the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine and is certified in Urologic Surgery by both the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and the American Board of Urology and is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Society For Pediatric Urology.

Dr. Bägli is also a Senior Associate Scientist in the Developmental & Stem Cell Biology research program at the SickKids Research Institute. He is currently one of only a handful of paediatric urologists with successful independent cell and molecular biology program in North America and the only one in Canada.

Dr. Bägli is currently investigating cell mechanism of injury and maldevelopment of the lower urinary tract. His lab focuses on cell interaction with the extracellular matrix and other components of the cell's micro-environment. He is currently exploring how epigenetic mechanisms may play a role in bladder malfunction, genital birth defects, and urinary infection. He continues to pursue innovative collaborations with clinicians and investigators in Canada and the United States. He has been principal author and co-author of over 120 papers and book chapters in both clinical paediatric urology as well as in basic research.

Last but not least, Dr. Bägli is also a classically trained pianist. He began playing at the age of 4 and has kept music a vital part of his life ever since. Along with Science and Medical training, Dr. Bägli completed a Music degree in Piano-Performance at McGill's Faculty of Music under the late Professor Dorothy Morton. Though his professional life leaves little time for serious music making, in 2002 he reconnected with music in a big way by participating for 7 days in the 2002 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition for Outstanding Amateurs in Fort Worth, TX. He has been striving to play and perform more regularly ever since. While drawn to all music periods and forms, including the solo and chamber repertoire of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, he holds a particular love for the music of Chopin, Schumann, and Brahms. With a belief in the power of music to move the body and soul, Vigour Projects marks Dr. Bägli's first time as a Member of an Arts Organization Board of Directors.

Mark Weinstock, Physician and Musician

Dr. Mark Weinstock is an award winning singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist. He has toured internationally in support of three albums, receiving glowing reviews from the media and music circles alike. As a Medical school graduate with an M.Ed in counselling psychology, Mark has been involved in a number of health initiatives both locally and overseas with organizations such as Peace by Peace, Child Family Life International and the Cambodia Orphan Fund. He recently developed a music program for children, Little Superstars Music, to help stimulate language and motor development. He feels privileged to be part of Vigour Projects and to continue to research the connections between medicine and music.

"Beautiful songs with meaningful lyrics." —JamBase, San Francisco

www.kindrecords.com, www.myspace.com/markweinstock, www.littlesuperstarsmusic.com

Edwin Gailits, Documentary Filmmaker

Edwin Gailits has worked in multiple arts fields, including as a professional and fine art photographer, producer / director for the stage, and film producer/director. In his films, he has profiled the work of Shibori fabric artists, examined relationships between satellite data imagery, mathematics and watercolour painting through a U.S. NSF funded program “Mathematics Across the Curriculum”, and created a health care documentary that examined the failings of the U.S. health care system. He has had numerous photographic exhibitions, including at the Art Gallery of Ontario, has been published by the National Film Board of Canada, and received the New Hampshire State Arts award for his film work.

He has a life-long passion for music, both as a collector and appreciator of music at live music events. Working for more than a decade for a non-profit theatre company and making films that revealed connections between science and the arts, made the opportunity to join the Vigour board a natural fit. He looks forward to seeing Vigour Projects bring together music and health and developing a broad new understanding of this emerging area of interest.



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For immediate release: July 2010

DOCTORS AND MUSICIANS COME TOGETHER TO PROMOTE MEATLESS MUSIC 4 MONDAYS SONG CONTEST

Early-bird Submission Deadline: **August 5th** at 12 pm (noon)
Song Showcase Date: **September 3rd, Trane Studio** - 964 Bathurst St.
Submission Web Site: www.vigourprojects.com

The Meatless Music 4 Mondays (MM4M) contest will use music as a tool to promote the health benefits of the international **Meat-free Mondays movement** (www.meatlessmonday.com). Why Meatless? Consumption of fruits and veggies has the strongest correlation to survival rates than does any other food group. Why 4? Everyone should eat approximately 4 servings of fruit and 4 servings of veggies per day to stay healthy.

Vigour Projects is a new not-for-profit, MaRS (www.marsdd.com) registered, social innovation initiative whose mission is to build healthy communities through music. Its first call to action is **Meatless Music 4 Mondays**, a song contest for local, independent musicians. Musicians are to submit an original song (any genre) with “heart-healthy” messaging. The only rule is that you must be creative (and no, it does not have to be radio quality). Each song submission costs \$5, the net proceeds of which will be donated to the **HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO**.

The winner will get to perform at Vigour Projects' upcoming concert, **VigourFest**, at **Trane Studio in Toronto on Sept 3, 2010**. VigourFest is a fundraising concert, which promotes healthy eating and behaviours in proximity to harvest week.

Deadline for “early bird” song submissions is Aug 5th at noon to receive a pair of tickets to Paul McCartney’s concert on August 8th or 9th in Toronto. The final contest winner will receive free recording studio time at Number 9 Audio Group, a profile review and live internet TV appearance with Lynk PR on ThatChannel.com and the song will serve as the MM4M theme song throughout the ongoing project.

Project-based Vigour Projects is the brainchild of Toronto Cardiologist and musician, **Dr. David Alter**. Dr. Alter brings together a team of musicians, music therapists, health care providers, and like-minded medical researchers as a way of developing a music health program with an evaluation or research component that will generate funds for a participating charity. Their first project, Meatless Music 4 Mondays, is a health promotion campaign that will support the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and is centred around the day of the week associated with the highest risk of cardiovascular death, that being Mondays.

For more details visit our website at www.vigourprojects.com, email Sarah Adamson at sarah@vigourprojects.com or call **647-895-0214**.

Featured Artist



Aaliah Michaela

Singer/songwriter Aaliah Michaela released her debut single “Letter to your Heart” which immediately received national airplay. Aaliah was honoured and proudly carries the title of Chum FM’s “Emerging Artist Canada” for the month of January 2010. Her first single charted with both Billboard and America’s Music Charts top 50 Hot AC Canada. These accomplishments, Aaliah Michaela achieved at the age of only 14 years old.

Aaliah is a resident singer/artist of the 3 Angels Broadcasting Network’s ‘The Kids Time Program’ show, broadcasting to more than 100 countries worldwide.

Aaliah Michaela began singing at the age of 3. At the age of 7, Aaliah performed her first solo gospel concert, which was then followed by a series of front acts for different prominent artists. She started writing songs when she was 9 years old.

Although her musical roots are entrenched in Gospel, Aaliah has successfully made the transition to pop with a voice that is mature beyond her years.

Aaliah Michaela is looking forward to the hard work and excitement that lies ahead as she pursues her career in the music industry.

“Never Walk Away”, written by Aaliah and Dr. Alter, serves as an example of a social reconstruction health-messaging song for Haiti. A similar process will be used for our new health-messaging music composition grant, called the Vigour Projects Health-Music Award, which will involve an afterschool program for teens (Ages 14-17).

*Listen to **Never Walk Away** on www.vigourprojects.com*

“You have already started to link music to medicine in a very important way: If building a healthy community by connecting good people means better health for all involved (it has been proven), making a community fueled by the love of music is the strongest, most primal dose of medicine you can administer. Togetherness. Something that makes the world a lot less intimidating, which in turn, makes people have a more positive outlook on life. By creating a community of good people, involved purely for the love of what they have the ability give (create), you will have an infectious project.”

—Dan Dwoskin, Toronto-based musician (www.thelastpiano.com)

“Vigour Projects is a really cool start-up - they want to connect music and health as a means of achieving social change. Their first idea is pretty simple - produce this song, sell it, and use the proceeds to help with community rebuilding and rejuvenation (they are working to build a partnership with not-for-profit organization for a project in Haiti).

This is their priority right now, but Vigour wants to go deeper than this - they want to more directly link music to community healing (e.g. helping a community to heal through local music). A good analogy is New Orleans - pre-Katrina, you couldn't walk a city block without hearing music. Community music all but disappeared for a significant period after Katrina, and other priorities meant that there wasn't any real effort to rebuild that aspect of community. The question they are asking, “Can music actually lead to tangible and measurable health benefits?” They want to tackle this head on - first in Haiti, though they are exploring other local opportunities. They are a cool organization and want to be really innovative.”

—Norm Tasevski, Former Social Entrepreneur in Residence, SIG@MaRS