

FREE CONCERT SERIES IN THE RICHARD BRADSHAW AMPHITHEATRE

PRESENTED BY



TD READY
COMMITMENT

VOCAL SERIES

February 28, 2024, 12 p.m.

THE COLOUR OF JOY

Canadian Art Song Project (CASP)

Jonelle Sills, soprano
Jorell Williams, baritone
Steven Philcox, piano

THE PROGRAM

My Day R. Nathaniel Dett
text by Daniel S. Twohig

The Voice of the Sea Dett

Were Thou the Moon Dett

The Winding Road Dett
text by Tertius Van Dyke

Jorell Williams, Steven Philcox

The Colour of Joy Maria Thompson Corley

When the World Was Green

Transition (text by Kanika Ambrose)

Elias 511 (text by Kanika Ambrose)

Ode to Our Joy (text by Christene A. Browne)

Jonelle Sills, Steven Philcox

The Colour of Joy was commissioned by CASP with the generous support of The Canada Council for the Arts

Photography, video, and audio recording are strictly prohibited during the performance.
You are welcome to take photos before and after the performance and are encouraged to share with us on:



@CanadianOpera

#FreeConcertSeries

Programming is subject to change. For complete up-to-date listings, and to sign up for email updates, visit coc.ca/FreeConcerts.

COMING UP NEXT AT THE FREE CONCERT SERIES

Tue. Mar. 5, 2024, 12-1 p.m.

INSTRUMENTAL SERIES

Voices of the Harp

Matt Dupont, harp

Jérémie Roy, narration

Discover harpist Matt Dupont's favourite pieces during this performance filled with gentle melodies that will stir the imagination. Poetry and music converge in brilliant dialogue throughout this historical journey. Come along on a musical voyage punctuated by literary masterpieces recited by actor Jérémie Roy.

Wed. Mar. 6, 2024, 12-1 p.m.

VOCAL SERIES

Wirth Vocal Prize Winner 2022/2023

Jingjing Xu, mezzo-soprano

Christopher Knopp, piano

Mezzo-soprano Jingjing Xu, winner of the 2022/2023 Wirth Vocal Prize, and collaborative pianist Christopher Knopp explore timeless and contemporary works.

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...

Wed. Mar. 13, 2024 | 12-1 p.m.

VOCAL/DANCE SERIES

COC March Break: Cendrillon

Artists of the Community Partnerships & Programs Department

Join COC Teaching Artists Karine White, Annemarie Cabri, and Timothy Cheung as they present an interactive workshop inspired by Massenet's 1899 opera, *Cendrillon*. Learn about Massenet's musical retelling of the Cinderella story through dance, set design, and listen to one of the opera's most famous arias.



Follow the QR code to access CASP's new recording *Known to Dreamers: Black Voices in Canadian Art Song*

The Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre is supported by the Free Concert Series Endowment Fund, established in honour of Richard Bradshaw by an anonymous donor



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FOUR SEASONS CENTRE
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Jonelle Sills – soprano

Jonelle Sills is one of the most exciting young sopranos of her generation. Named one of CBC Music's "30 hot classical musicians under 30" in 2020, Sills recently made her company debut at the Canadian Opera Company as Mimi in *La Bohème*, a performance that was lauded as being a "beautifully sensitive Mimi with careful control and colour" (*The Globe and Mail*). This season also sees role debuts as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at Edmonton Opera, Micaëla in *Carmen* at Vancouver Opera (VO), Anna Glawari in *The Merry Widow* at Toronto Operetta Theatre, and, in recital for the Prince Edward County Chamber Festival with the Viano Quartet. Other recent engagements include Sills returning to VO to make her mainstage debut as Helena in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, joining the star-studded all-Canadian cast of Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* at Koerner Hall, her return to the National Arts Centre Orchestra under the batons of Alexander Shelley, Dinuk Wijeratne, and Cosette Justo Valdés, and, joining the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir for Brahms' *Requiem*. Sills' past highlights include her Canadian tour as Mimi in *La Bohème* with Toronto's Against The Grain Theatre (AtG), as a recital soloist with Ottawa Chamberfest, her

residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity for their Opera in the 21st Century program where she premiered the role of Esther in Poala Prestini and Royce Vavreck's *Silent Light*, and her company debut with AtG in Vivier's *Kopernikus*, which earned her a 2019 Dora Award as a member of the ensemble.



Jorell Williams – baritone

American baritone Jorell Williams, known for having "a solid vocal core and easy, natural production" (*Opera News*) and "a deliciously resonant baritone voice" (*Broadway World*) has been heralded as "a rock-solid singer with a keen understanding of his own expressive depths" (*The Washington Post*), is gracing the world's most prominent concert and opera stages.

Now based in Toronto, this season showcases Williams in debut engagements with the Ottawa Choral Society, Symphony Nova Scotia, Opera Omaha, Greek National Opera, Catapult Opera, the Canadian Art Song Project, and returns to the Elmer Iseler Singers, the National Philharmonic Orchestra, and Brooklyn Art Song Society.

Williams is widely recognized for his concert work, having performed as a soloist in Bach's *Magnificat*, Handel's *Messiah*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* as well as Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

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Steven Philcox – piano

Highly regarded as one of Canada's finest collaborators, pianist Steven Philcox is a frequent partner of Canada's vocal elite performing in concert halls both at home and abroad. His extensive recital experience, interest in non-traditional approaches to performance, and curiosity for repertoire outside the standard canon have inspired innovation in program curation and recital presentation.

From 1999 to 2010, Philcox was a celebrated member of the music staff of the COC, where he served as Répétiteur and Assistant Conductor on more than 35 productions and was the pianist of choice for baroque and classical continuo. In 2006, Philcox distinguished himself in an auspicious debut conducting the company's final performance of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the newly opened Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. Other conducting credits with the company (as Assistant Conductor) include performances of Gounod's *Faust*, Britten's *Albert Herring* and Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*.

As a pedagogue, Philcox has given masterclasses throughout North America and is regularly invited to mentor young artists at many prestigious training programs. Recent highlights include Opera on the Avalon, Vancouver International Song Institute, University of Texas, Austin, Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio, Stratford Summer Music Vocal Academy, Ukrainian Art Song Project Summer Institute, and the Centre for Operatic Studies in Italy. He is the director of the Art of Song program at Toronto Summer Music Festival and has been an invited jury member for vocal and piano competitions throughout Canada.

Philcox is Associate Professor and head of Collaborative Piano studies at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music. He is a founding Co-Artistic Director of Canadian Art Song Project and has recorded for the Stone Records and Centrediscs labels.

Canadian Art Song Project

Canadian Art Song Project (s) was founded in 2011 by tenor Lawrence Wilford and pianist Steven Philcox. Its mission is to build on the rich legacy of Canadian song by engaging composers, writers, and performers to create new music while also providing opportunities for Canadian artists to champion the wealth of existing song literature.

Since its inception, CASP has commissioned 19 new works including those by Brian Harman/David Brock, Brian Current, James Rolfe/André Alexis, Marjan Mozetich, Tawnie Olson, Jeffrey Ryan, Cecilia Livingston, Ana Sokolović, Abigail Richardson-Schulte, Maria Thompson Corley, and Christos Hatzis.

CASP recordings are available on the Centrediscs label. Their recording *Summer Night* (2019), dedicated to the solo songs of Healey Willan, was nominated for a JUNO in 2020 as Classical Album of the year: Vocal or Choral. Their 2024 release entitled *Known to Dreamers* highlights contributions of Black Canadian composers and poets to Canadian art song.

In addition to research, commissioning and recording, Canadian Art Song Project presents recitals and performances that highlight song in traditional and innovative ways through partnerships with arts organizations across Canada.

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