FREE CONCERT SERIES
IN THE RICHARD BRADSHAW AMPHITHEATRE

PRESENTED BY
TD READY COMMITMENT

VOCAL SERIES

March 21, 2023, 12 p.m.

AGAINST THE GRAIN THEATRE SPRING PREVIEW

Jaclyn Grossman, soprano
Charlotte Hellekant, mezzo-soprano
Gerald Finley, bass-baritone
Stephen Higgins, piano, conductor, arranger
Holly Kroeker, piano

THE PROGRAM

The artists behind Against the Grain Theatre's spring production of *Bluebeard's Castle* present a program of song, with a special sneak peek of the production opening on March 29, 2023.

The show will be a contemporary retelling of *Bluebeard's Castle* by Béla Bartók, starring Canadian operatic superstar Gerald Finley.

This radical retelling, originally produced by the ground-breaking opera company Theatre of Sound in London, England, features a new English libretto and orchestral arrangement, reframing the piece as a love story between a long-married couple living with dementia.

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:

FreeConcertSeries #FreeConcertSeries @CanadianOpera

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

VOCAL/DANCE SERIES
Tue. Mar. 28, 2023, 12–1 p.m.
Opera Atelier
The Resurrection
Costumed excerpts of Handel's first operatic masterpiece will be performed in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre just in time for the Easter season. This extraordinary feast of vocal music and dancing plays out in the heavenly and earthly realms.

INSTRUMENTAL SERIES
Wed. Mar. 29, 2023, 12–1 p.m.
Artists of the Glenn Gould School
Dvořák's Slavonic Dances
The talented piano students of The Glenn Gould School come together to perform a dazzling demonstration of their virtuosity. For this concert, students will pair off into duet teams to present Dvořák's brilliant *Slavonic Dances* (Book 1).

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...

VOCAL SERIES
Tue. Apr. 25, 2023, 12–1 p.m.
Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio
Queen Hezumuryango, mezzo-soprano
Alex Hetherington, mezzo-soprano
Liz Upchurch, piano
Quivering Woods, Starry Sky
COC Ensemble Studio mezzo-sopranos Queen Hezumuryango and Alex Hetherington join head of the COC Ensemble Studio, Liz Upchurch, for a program that explores the richness and depth of the mezzo-soprano repertoire.

THE COC ACADEMY
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Canada

Gerald Finley – bass-baritone

Grammy Award-winning Canadian bass-baritone Gerald Finley is one of the most revered and influential artists of our time, with celebrated performances at the world's major opera and concert venues and recordings on CD and DVD with major labels in a wide variety of repertoire. His extensive career is devoted to the complete spectrum of vocal art, encompassing operatic, orchestral and song repertoire, collaborating with the greatest composers, orchestras and conductors.

Recent appearance highlights include the 2018 BBC Last Night of the Proms where he performed a range of songs including Stanford's *Songs of the Sea* and "Soliloquy" from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*, Iago in a new production of *Otello* at the Bayerische Staatsoper and the Canadian Opera Company, the title role in *Bluebeard's Castle* and Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Metropolitan Opera and Bayerische Staatsoper, the title role in *Falstaff* at the Wiener Staatsoper, a soloist in Beethoven's 9th Symphony conducted by Bernard Haitink in Munich and at the Salzburg Festival with Riccardo Muti, the opening gala concert at the Opéra national de Paris with Gustavo Dudamel; *Bluebeard's Castle* in a highly acclaimed production at Stone Nest in London, UK and with l'Orchestre de Paris, the Vienna Philharmonic and Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra; Vaughan Williams 1st Symphony at the Festival Radio France Occitanie Montpellier. Recent recitals include Wigmore Hall, Middle Temple Hall, the NDR Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, Vienna, Prague, and the USA.

This season sees Finley return to San Francisco Opera as Anthony in the world premiere of John Adams' *Anthony and Cleopatra*; the Opéra national de Paris as Scarpia in *Tosca* and Count in Neta Jones' new production of *The Marriage of Figaro*; The Royal Opera House as the title character in *Tannhäuser*; Bayerische Staatsoper in one of his signature roles, Iago in *Otello*; and Staatsoper Unter den Linden to make his debut as the title role in *The Flying Dutchman*. On the concert platform, Finley joins Lahti Symphony Orchestra for Kaija Saariaho's *True Fire* under the baton of Dalia Staveska and a concert and recital at the Tongyeong International Music Festival.

Born in Montreal, he began singing as a chorister in Ottawa, and completed his musical studies at the Royal College of Music, King's College, Cambridge, and the National Opera Studio. He is a Fellow and Visiting Professor at the Royal College of Music. In 2014, he climbed Kilimanjaro for the charity Help Musicians UK. In 2017, he was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire and had previously been appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Jaclyn Grossman – soprano

Hailed as an "exciting dramatic soprano" (*Opera Canada*), Jaclyn Grossman is a Resident Artist with Pacific Opera Victoria and a member of the Rebanks Family Fellowship with Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music. She is the 2022 winner of the IRCPA Blueprints Award and alumna of the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme, Banff Opera in the 21st Century, and Sewanee Music Festival. A proud co-founder of Likht Ensemble, Grossman is passionate about sharing music by Jewish composers from the Holocaust. In 2022, she performed the title role in Henech Kon's *Bas-Sheve*, a Yiddish opera in its North American premiere with the Ashkenaz Festival, Milken Center, and Yiddish Summer Weimar. This season, Grossman will perform recitals in Montreal with the Schulich School of Music's alumni series, Chattanooga, as part of a collaboration with the Chattanooga Symphony and Chattanooga Public Library, and the Richard Bradshaw Free Concert Series at the Canadian Opera Company, and will cover the role of Judith in Against the Grain Theatre's production of *Bluebeard's Castle*.

Charlotte Hellekant – mezzo-soprano

A compelling stage performer with a repertoire ranging from the baroque to contemporary classics, Charlotte Hellekant is one of Scandinavia's leading mezzo-sopranos with a career equally successful on both the opera stage and concert platform. She has made her mark on opera stages on both sides of the Atlantic, notably at the Metropolitan Opera, Opéra national de Paris, and Glyndebourne Festival; and has inspired some of the world's leading composers to write especially for her. This includes Toshio Hosokawa, who created the role of Murasame for her in his acclaimed *Matsukaze*, and subsequently wrote his monodrama *The Raven* for her. Lyric roles include Charlotte in *Werther* with Deutsche Oper Berlin and the title role of *Carmen* with Royal Swedish Opera, whilst Handel interpretations include Ino in *Semele* at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées and Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* for Opernhaus Zürich. She appeared as Marguérite in La Fura dels Baus' spectacular production of *La damnation de Faust* at Salzburg Festival, and sang the role of Judith in Duke *Bluebeard's Castle* in concert at the Bergen International Festival.

Stephen Higgins – conductor and arranger

Stephen Higgins is a conductor, musical director, arranger, and producer who has worked extensively in the UK and abroad.

He has conducted many world premieres: *The Way Back Home* directed by Katie Mitchell at the Young Vic and Opéra national de Paris; *Dr Dee* by Damon Albarn, directed by Rufus Norris at the Manchester Festival and at English National Opera [ENO]; and *The Duchess of Malfi*, a collaboration with ENO and punchdrunk.

Other conducting credits include *The Magic Flute* for ENO, *Owen Wingrave* for the Opéra national de Paris, *Thais* for Chelsea Opera Group, *The Elixir of Love* and *Hansel and Gretel* for Opera Holland Park, and *Don Pasquale* for Welsh National Opera with a cast including Bryn Terfel and Andrew Shore.

Higgins worked with Stephen Sondheim on revivals of *A Little Night Music* and *Sunday in the Park with George* at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, conducted Gershwin's *Crazy for You* in Gothenburg, *Sweeney Todd* with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, and *Phantom of the Opera* in London's West End. He also was Musical Director of a gala concert for the London Climate Change Festival with Janie Dee, Brian May, Rob Brydon, Gerald Finley, and others, broadcast on Sky Arts on World Earth Day.

Higgins is Musical Director for experimental opera company Silent Opera, where he has created electronic scores presented alongside live performances of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, as well as a new staging of the entirety of Disney's *Fantasia*.

2020 saw Higgins write and musically direct an update of the *Carmen* story as a Scandi-noir thriller, which premiered on Norwegian network NRK. Higgins' new company, Theatre of Sound, launched with a production of *Bluebeard's Castle*. With five-star reviews from national and international press and a nomination for the South Bank Sky Arts Awards, it is now set to tour the US and Canada.

Holly Kroeker – piano

Holly Kroeker is an operatic vocal coach, collaborative pianist, and répétiteur based in Montreal. A graduate of Opéra de Montréal's Atelier lyrique Young Artist Training Program (2018-2021), she currently works as pianist and assistant to musical formation for the program.

Last season, her activities included principal rehearsal pianist for a double bill of *Riders to the Sea/Le flambeau de la nuit* by Vaughan Williams and Tanguay-Labrosse and *The Magic Flute* at Opera de Montreal, Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* at Jeunesse Musicales du Canada, and *Così fan tutte* at Edmonton Opera. Last summer, Kroeker was on faculty at the Banff Centre for the Arts & Creativity's Opera in the 21st century program, where she previously participated as an intern pianist/coach and worked on Prestini and Vavrek's *Silent Light*, as well as a production of Bernstein's *Candide*. She has also served as faculty pianist for ICAV/CVAI in Montreal.