

FREE CONCERT SERIES IN THE RICHARD BRADSHAW AMPHITHEATRE

PRESENTED BY



VOCAL SERIES

March 21, 2024, 12 p.m.

AN AFTERNOON AT THE ITALIAN OPERA

ARTISTS OF THE COC ENSEMBLE STUDIO

Ariane Cossette, soprano

Alex Hetherington, mezzo-soprano

Queen Hezumuryango, mezzo-soprano

Brian Cho, pianist

Mattia Senesi, pianist

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
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

THE COC ACADEMY
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THE CATHERINE AND MAXWELL MEIGHEN FOUNDATION

MAJOR SUPPORT FROM
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ARIAS: Canadian Opera Student Development Fund,
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Ariane Cossette is generously sponsored by Anne & Tony Arrell
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Brian Cho is generously sponsored by Marjorie & Roy Linden, Brian Wilks
Mattia Senesi is generously sponsored by ARIAS: Canadian Opera Student Development Fund

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THE PROGRAM

“È strano... Sempre libera” (*La Traviata*) Giuseppe Verdi
Ariane Cossette | Brian Cho

Il tramonto Ottorino Respighi
Queen Hezumuryango | Mattia Senesi

“Una voce poco fa” (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) Gioacchino Rossini
Alex Hetherington | Brian Cho

O sole mio Eduardo di Capua
Mattia Senesi and Brian Cho

Sogno Francesco Paolo Tosti
Alex Hetherington | Brian Cho

A vucchella Tosti
Ariane Cossette | Mattia Senesi

Serenata Tosti
Ariane Cossette, Alex Hetherington, Queen Hezumuryango | Mattia Senesi

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COMING UP NEXT AT THE FREE CONCERT SERIES

Fri. Mar. 22, 2024 | 12–1 p.m.
VOCAL/INSTRUMENTAL SERIES

Butterfly Transformation

Veronica Johnny, voice and hand drum

Butterfly Transformation with Cree/Dene artist Veronica Johnny is an interactive performance infusing Indigenous hand drumming and rock songs by Veronica's band, The Johnnys. The focus will include the Butterfly Teaching of Cree Elder Joanne Dallaire, and transmutation from a Two-Spirit perspective. A Q&A will follow the presentation.

Tue. Mar. 26, 2024 | 12–1 p.m.
VOCAL/DANCE SERIES

All Is Love

Opera Atelier

Costumed excerpts of Opera Atelier's *All Is Love* – a ravishing blend of singing, ballet, and orchestral music, staged for the acoustic of Koerner Hall and featuring the artists of the Atelier Ballet.

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...

Thu. Mar. 28, 2024 | 12–1 p.m.
VOCAL SERIES

France in Springtime

Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio

The COC's Ensemble Studio invites you to journey to France and enjoy *un apres-midi* at the Free Concert Series. Showcasing French art song, arias, and *melodies*, this concert will bring you overseas and back again—no passport required!

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Il Tramonto

There late was One within whose subtle being,
As light and wind within some delicate cloud
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
Genius and death contended. None may know
The sweetness of the joy which made his
breath.

Fail, like the trances of the summer air,
When, with the lady of his love, who then
First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
He walked along the pathway of a field
Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er,
But to the west was open to the sky.

There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods - and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of the crowded
trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.

"Is it not strange, Isabel," said the youth,
"I never saw the sun? We will walk here
To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me."

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
In love and sleep - but when the morning
came,
The lady found her lover dead and cold.

Let none believe that God in mercy gave
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
But year by year lived on - in truth I think
Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles,
And that she did not die, but lived to tend
Her aged father, were a kind of madness,

If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.

For but to see her were to read the tale
Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard
hearts
Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief.

Her eyes were black and lustreless and wan:
Her eyelashes were worn away with tears,
Her lips and cheeks were like things dead - so
pale.
Her hands were thin, and through their
wandering veins and weak articulations might
be seen.

Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and
day,
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

"Inheritor of more than earth can give,
Passionless calm and silence unproved,
Where the dead find, oh, not sleep! But rest,
And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
Or live, a drop in the deep sea of Love;
Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were - Peace!"
This was the only moan she ever made.

(Text: Percy Bysshe Shelley)

Sogno

I dreamt you were on your knees,
Like a saint praying to the Lord.
You looked at me from the depth of your eyes,
Your gaze flashed with love.
You spoke to me softly,
Her asking me for mercy.

Just a look, and what it promised,
You begged there, bent at my feet.

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I stayed quiet, my soul strong,
Fighting the tempting desire.
It felt like torture and death,
But I managed to say no.

But your lip touched my face,
And the strength of the heart betrayed me.
I closed my eyes, and reached out for you,
But, it was a dream... and the beautiful dream
faded away.

(Text: Olindo Guerrini)

A vucchella

You are like a small flower,
You have a small mouth
Just a little, a little
Faded.

Oh, give it, give it to me,
It's like a small rose!
Give me a kiss,
Give it to me, Canatella!

Give it to me and take it,
A small kiss,
A small kiss,
Like your small mouth,
That looks like a small rose.
Just a little, a little
Faded.

*(Text: Gabriele D'Annunzio
Translation: Natalia Chernega)*

Serenata

Fly, o serenade: My delight is alone,
And, with her beautiful abandoned head,
Fly between her sheets.

O serenade, fly. O serenade, fly.
The moon shines brightly,
Silence extends its wings,
And behind the shadows of the dark
Alcove the lamp burns.
The moon shines brightly.
The moon shines brightly.
Fly, o serenade,
Fly, o serenade, fly.
Ah! There. Ah! There.

Fly, o serenade: My delight is alone,
But, still smiling half muted,
Return between her sheets.

O serenade, fly. O serenade, fly.
The wave dreams on the shore,
And the wind on the branch;
And my blonde lady still denies
A place for my kisses.

The wave dreams on the shore.
The wave dreams on the shore.
Fly, o serenade,
Fly, o serenade, fly.

(Text: Giovanni Alfredo Cesareo)

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Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio



Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio: (l-r) pianist Brian Cho, mezzo-soprano Alex Hetherington, tenor Wesley Harrison, soprano Karoline Podolak, mezzo-soprano Queen Hezumuryango, pianist Mattia Senesi, sopranos Charlotte Siegel and Ariane Cossette, and baritone Korin Thomas-Smith

Brian Cho – pianist

Brian Cho studied in London, Ontario, where he completed his Bachelor of Musical Arts and Masters in Collaborative Piano at Western University and has since participated in the Orford Summer Music Academy, the Accademia Europea Dell'Opera, and, most recently, Music Academy of the West. He won first place in the 2023 Marilyn Horne Song Competition and has been nominated numerous times in the Classical Musician of the Year category of the Forest City London Music Awards. In addition to being an accomplished concert pianist and music director, Cho is the co-founder and head coach of

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Can of Soup Collective, a non-profit organization dedicated to making opera accessible and relatable to wider audiences.

Ariane Cossette – soprano

Canadian soprano Ariane Cossette is a graduate of Conservatoire de musique de Montréal and Université de Montréal. She has received bursaries from many foundations including Jeunesses Musicales Canada, Art Song Foundation of Canada, George-Cedric-Ferguson Foundation, Opéra Bouffe du Québec, and Jacqueline Desmarais Foundation. In 2023, she won Second Prize in the Louis and Christina Quilico Awards. As a concert soloist, she made her France debut in 2018 and 2019 in Chœurs Éternels Concert, under the direction of Andrei Feher and Aldo Salvagno. Her recent opera credits include Frasquita in *Carmen* (COC), Micaëla in *La tragédie de Carmen* (Université de Montréal) and Selene in *Endymion's Dream* (COSA Canada). Cossette is looking forward to returning for a second year in the COC Ensemble Studio. She can be seen on the COC mainstage this season as Pepik/Woodpecker in *The Cunning Little Vixen* and as Norina in the Ensemble Studio performance of *Don Pasquale*.

Alex Hetherington – mezzo-soprano

Mezzo-soprano Alex Hetherington, named in 2023 as one of CBC's "30 hot classical musicians under 30," was most recently seen on the COC mainstage as Mercédès in *Carmen* (2022) and the Attendant in *Salome* (2023). Her recent concert performances include Mozart's *Requiem* (National Arts Centre), *Songs from the House of Death* (Victoria Symphony), and *Neruda Songs* (University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra). Past operatic credits include Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Carmen in *La tragédie de Carmen* (UofT Opera), Nicklausse in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, and [Riley] in Tapestry Opera's *R.U.R. A Torrent of Light*, for which she won a 2022 Dora Mavor Moore Award. Hetherington holds a master's in opera performance from the University of Toronto and has a passion for contemporary music, composition, and innovative recital programming. She can be seen at the COC this season as the Second Handmaiden in *Medea*, and in a relaxed performance of *The Cunning Little Vixen* as the Dog.

Queen Hezumuryango – mezzo-soprano

Originally from Burundi, Queen Hezumuryango holds both her master's degree and bachelor's degree in vocal performance from the University of Montreal, where she earned a number of prizes that include the Ferguson Scholarship, the Gadbois Bursary, and the support of the Jeunesses Musicales Canada foundation. Performance credits include Marquise de Berkenfield in *La fille du régiment* (Festival d'opéra de Québec), Mercédès in *Carmen* (Canadian Opera Company), Larina in *Eugene Onegin* (Highlands Opera Studio), and Carmen in *La tragédie de Carmen* (Atelier d'opéra à l'Université de Montréal). Hezumuryango was a semifinalist in the OSM Competition in 2021 and has participated in several prestigious programs including the Canadian Vocal Arts Institute, the Toronto Summer Opera Workshop, and the Lunenburg Academy of Music Performance.

Mattia Senesi – pianist

Mattia Senesi is an Italian pianist born in Arezzo, Italy. He graduated with honours at Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali (ISSM) Franci of Siena and then completed his master's in piano performance with honours at ISSM Mascagni of Livorno. During his studies, Senesi won several national and international competitions, both as a soloist and as part of chamber music ensembles. He has collaborated with different choirs and opera ensembles in Italy and North America, such as

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Coro Voceincanto, Ensemble Modulation, Choir Massenet, University of Tennessee Opera Theater, and Opera Viva! Summer program in Verona, Italy. Currently, Senesi is completing his doctorate in Collaborative Piano at the University of Montreal, where he also served as a collaborative pianist for Projet Nouvel Opéra, Opéra de l'Université de Montreal, and for the university's École LUMI.

Liz Upchurch – Head of Music, Ensemble Studio

Liz Upchurch is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music in London, England, where she won several prizes as a solo pianist and accompanist. As a music director, vocal coach and répétiteur she has worked in 21st-century and traditional opera, music theatre, and theatre. She has also covered a wide range of working techniques with singers, actors and instrumentalists in community and educational projects. For many years she worked with young artists at the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh where she played for masterclasses with artists such as Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Suzanne Danco, William Pleeth and Dame Joan Sutherland. Ms. Upchurch has also worked at the Kammeroper Schloss Rheinsberg festival in Germany and the National Theatre in London. She held a faculty position in the 20th-century opera and song program at the Banff Centre for the Arts and was répétiteur and chorus director at Edmonton Opera. As a pianist she has performed all over Europe and has been broadcast with the BBC, Norwegian Radio and CBC. Ms. Upchurch also appeared as a judge on Bravo's hit series, *Bathroom Divas: So you want to be an opera singer!*

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