

# FREE CONCERT SERIES IN THE RICHARD BRADSHAW AMPHITHEATRE

PRESENTED BY



VOCAL SERIES

March 28, 2024, 12 p.m.

## *FRANCE IN SPRINGTIME*

ARTISTS OF THE COC ENSEMBLE STUDIO

Karoline Podolak, soprano

Wesley Harrison, tenor

Korin Thomas-Smith, baritone

Brian Cho, pianist

Mattia Senesi, pianist

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FOUR SEASONS CENTRE  
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## THE PROGRAM

“Youkali” (*Marie-Galante*)..... Kurt Weill  
Karoline Podolak | Mattia Senesi

*Le Bestiaire Ou Cortege D'orphée* ..... Francis Poulenc  
Le dromadaire  
La sauterelle  
Le dauphin  
L'écrevisse  
La carpe  
Korin Thomas-Smith | Brian Cho

*Clairières dans le ciel*..... Lili Boulanger  
Elle était descendue au bas de la prairie  
Un poète disait  
Parfois, je suis triste  
Wesley Harrison | Mattia Senesi

*Le Bestiaire*..... Rachel Laurin  
Le lièvre  
Le lapin  
L'éléphant  
La colombe  
Le boeuf  
Le cheval  
Korin Thomas-Smith | Brian Cho

“Ombre légère” (*Dinorah*)..... Giacomo Meyerbeer  
Karoline Podolak | Mattia Senesi

“Au fond du temple saint” (*Les pêcheurs de perles*)..... Georges Bizet  
Wesley Harrison, Korin Thomas-Smith | Mattia Senesi

“Merci, jeunes amies” (*Les vêpres siciliennes*) ..... Giuseppe Verdi  
Karoline Podolak | Mattia Senesi

“Tous les trois réunis” (*La fille du régiment*)..... Gaetano Donizetti  
Karoline Podolak, Wesley Harrison, Korin Thomas-Smith | Brian Cho

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## COMING UP NEXT AT THE FREE CONCERT SERIES

Tue. Apr. 9, 2024 | 12-1 p.m.

INSTRUMENTAL/VOCAL SERIES

*Stories from the Front Lines of Music & Medicine*

Pulse

*Stories from the Front Lines of Music and Medicine* combines storytelling and live instrumental and vocal music, inviting the audience into a music therapist's experience of working with individuals with life-limiting illnesses. This performance will feature classical chamber music alongside popular vocal repertoire, with narration by an oncology/palliative care music therapist. This program will be led by Pulse members, cellist Dr. Andrew Ascenzo and music therapist Dr. SarahRose Black, and will feature a superb lineup of guest musicians.

Wed. Apr. 10, 2024 | 12-1 p.m.

INSTRUMENTAL SERIES

*Chamber Connections*

Artists of The Glenn Gould School

Some of the brightest rising stars on the Canadian classical music scene illuminate the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre in an exciting hour of chamber music celebrating their victories at The Glenn Gould Chamber Music Competition.

## YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...

Wed. May 8, 2024 | 12-1 p.m.

VOCAL SERIES

*Les Adieux*

Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio

Charlotte Siegel, soprano

Queen Hezumuryango, mezzo-soprano

Brian Cho, piano

COC Ensemble Studio artists Charlotte Siegel and Queen Hezumuryango bid farewell and thank you to the Ensemble Studio with a graduating recital that showcases their skill, growth, and dramatic ranges.

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## **Youkali**

It is almost in the end of the world,  
My boat wandering  
At the mercy of the waves  
Took me there one day.  
This island is small,  
But the fairy that lives there  
Gently invites us  
To take a tour.

Youkali, it is the land of our desires.  
Youkali, it is happiness and pleasure.  
Youkali, it is the land where one leaves all  
cares.  
It is the light in our night,  
The star we follow, that's Youkali.

Youkali, it is the respect of all the taken vows.  
Youkali, it is the country of beautiful love.  
It is the hope in the heart of all humans,  
The deliverance that we wait for tomorrow.

Youkali, it is the land of our desires.  
Youkali, it is happiness and pleasure.  
But it is a dream, is madness,  
There is no Youkali.

And life drags us down --  
Tiresome, unadventurous.  
But the poor human soul,  
Seeking everywhere oblivion,  
Has known, to leave the earth  
To find the mystery.  
Where our dreams take refuge,  
In some Youkali

*(Text: Kurt Weill)*

## **Le dromadaire (The Dromedary)**

With his four dromedaries

Don Pedro of Alfaroubeira  
wandered throughout the world and admired  
it.  
He did what I would wish to do  
If I had four dromedaries.

## **La sauterelle (The Grasshopper)**

Here is the fragile grasshopper,  
the nourishment of Saint John.  
May my verses be like it:  
A treat for the very best people.

## **Le dauphin (The Dolphin)**

Dolphins, you play in the sea,  
Yet the waves are still bitter.  
Does my joy ever burst out?  
Life is still cruel.

## **L'écrevisse (The Crayfish)**

Uncertainty, o my delicacies  
You and I, we move about  
As crayfish move about:  
Backwards, backwards.

## **La carpe (The Carp)**

In your moats, in your ponds,  
Carp, how long you live!  
Has death forgotten you,  
fish of melancholy?

*(Text: Guillaume Apollinaire  
Translation: Christopher Goldsack )*

## **Elle était descendue au bas de la prairie (She had reached the low-lying meadow)**

She had reached the low-lying meadow,  
And, since the meadow was all a-blossom  
With plants that like to grow in water,  
I had picked these flooded flowers.

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Soon, soaking wet, she reached the top  
Of that blossoming meadow.  
She was laughing and gasping with the gawky  
Grace of girls who are too tall.  
Her eyes looked like lavender flowers.

#### **Un poète disait (A poet said)**

A poet said that when he was young,  
He blossomed with verse, like rose-trees with  
roses.  
When I think of her, an endless spring  
Seems to babble in my heart.  
As God places a church-scent on the lily,  
And coral on the cheeks of the cherry,  
I wish to place, devotedly, on her  
The colour of a scent that shall have no name.

#### **Parfois, je suis triste (Sometimes, I am sad)**

Sometimes I am sad. And suddenly, I think of  
her.  
Then, I am overjoyed. But I grow sad again,  
Because I do not know how much she loves  
me.  
She is the girl with the limpid soul,  
And who, in her heart, guards with jealousy  
The unrivalled passion garnered for one alone.  
She went before the limes had blossomed,  
And since they flowered after she had gone,  
I was astonished to see, my friend's,  
Lime-tree branches devoid of flowers.

*(Text: Francis Jammes  
Translation: Richard Stokes)*

#### **Le lièvre (The Hare)**

Don't be lascivious and fearful  
Like the hare and the lover.  
But let your brain always be  
The pregnant doe-hare which conceives.

#### **Le lapin (The Rabbit)**

I know of another cony  
Which quite alive I want to catch.

Its warren is among the thyme  
Of the valleys of the kingdom of Tenderness.

#### **L'éléphant (The Elephant)**

Like an elephant with his ivory,  
I have a precious blessing in my mouth.  
Dead purple-shells! I buy my glory  
At the cost of melodious words.

#### **La colombe (The Dove)**

Dove, the love and the spirit  
Which fathered Jesus Christ.  
Like you, I love a Mary  
Only with her shall I marry.

#### **Le bœuf (The Cow)**

This cherub is reciting the praise  
Of heaven where, near the angels,  
We will live once more my dear friends,  
Once the good Lord has permitted it.

#### **Le cheval (The Horse)**

My hard formal dreams will be able to sit  
astride you.  
My destiny with its golden chariot  
Will be your handsome coachman,  
Who, as reins, will hold phrenetically stretched  
My verses, the paragons of all poetry.

*(Text: Guillaume Apollinaire  
Translation: Christopher Goldsack )*

#### **Ombre légère (Shadow Song)**

Come now, hurry! And take heed  
Make your best efforts in dance and song!  
Your airy shadow, here by my side.

O do not hide! No, no, no!  
Elf, sprite or fairy, I pray thee, tarry,  
O do not hide! No, no, no.

Wilt thou believe me,

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'Twould deeply grieve me, if thou should glide  
far away!

Ah! ah! Do not hide, ah, do not hide!  
Each morning sees my heart rejoice,  
Stay, if it please thee. Dance to my voice!

To give thee pleasure, I'll dance in measure,  
I'll smile, I'll play, Shadow, come nigh!  
Hear me! Reply! Sing as do I!  
Ah! Ah! 'tis well! Ah! Ah! 'tis well! Ah! reply!

God this day approves me as his loving bride,  
As his loving bride, forever to bide?  
Dost thou know?  
But thou disappearest! Wilt thou go away  
When my voice thou hearest?

In darkness I fear me! I, alas, am alone!  
Ah! return and cheer me,  
Ah! thou cruel one! cruel, from me dost thou  
flee?

*(Text: Nathan Haskell Dole)*

**Au fond du temple saint (At the back of the  
holy temple)**

ZURGA  
At the back of the holy temple,  
Decorated with flowers and gold,  
A woman appears!

NADIR  
A woman appears!

ZURGA  
I can still see her!

NADIR  
I can still see her!

ZURGA  
The prostrate crowd  
Looks at her amazed

And murmurs under its breath:  
Look, this is the goddess  
Looming up in the shadow,  
And holding out her arms to us.

NADIR  
Her veil parts slightly.  
What a vision! What a dream!  
The crowd is kneeling.

NADIR & ZURGA  
Yes, it is she!  
It is the goddess,  
More charming and more beautiful.  
Yes, it is she!  
It is the goddess  
Who has come down among us.  
Her veil has parted and the crowd is kneeling.

ZURGA  
But through the crowd  
She makes her way.

NADIR  
Already her long veil  
Hides her face from us.

ZURGA  
My eyes, alas!  
Seek her in vain!

NADIR & ZURGA  
Yes, it is her, the goddess,  
Who comes to unite us this day.  
And, faithful to my promise,  
I wish to cherish you like a brother!  
It is her, the goddess,  
Who comes to unite us this day!  
Yes, let us share the same fate,  
Let us be united until death!

*(Text: Michel Carré and Eugène Cormon  
Translation: Nigel Dugdale )*

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**Merci jeunes amies (Thank you, beloved friends)**

Thank you, beloved friends,  
For these charming flowers;  
The lovely gift is a reflection  
Of your heartfelt sincerity!  
Oh, welcome is the bond  
That awaits me through love.  
If you will bring me bridesmaids,  
Happy vows will fill my heart.  
Thanks for the gift!  
Ah, yes! Ah, yes!

Dearest dream, oh, sweet intoxication!  
My heart leaps at this new love!  
Already I breathe a soft air  
That makes all my senses reel.  
Oh, my Sicilian homeland,  
A tranquil day shines bright.  
Too much dreadful vengeance  
Tears at your wounded heart!

Be filled with hope, forget the pain  
Of all you have endured.  
May the day of my rejoicing  
Be the day of your glory, too.  
I welcome the gift of these flowers  
Ah, yes! Ah, yes!  
Dearest dream, oh, sweet intoxication!  
My heart leaps at this unknown love!  
Already I breathe a gentle air  
That makes all my senses reel.

*(Text: Eugène Scribe and Charles Duveyrier  
Translation: Miriam Ellis)*

**Tous les trois reunis (We three are reunited)**

Reunited at last!  
Oh, how happy we three are together.  
What a joy! What a delight!  
Reunited in love and affection.

SULPICE: Beautiful memories!  
TONIO: Beautiful times of war!  
MARIE: Ah, you were so far from us...  
SULPICE: You both left!  
TONIO: He will come back...  
SULPICE: I hardly believe it...  
MARIE: The good days are here again  
Close to you, Sulpice, and side-by-side.

Reunited at last!  
Oh, how happy we three are together.  
What a joy! What a delight!  
Reunited in love and affection.

TONIO: You will speak for me!  
MARIE: You must speak for him!  
TONIO: And fulfill my wishes.  
MARIE: You must not delay, my friend!  
SULPICE: But you don't know, listen to me!  
TONIO: I need your promise!  
MARIE: Since I have his tenderness and love.  
TONIO: And since I have her love, you will  
make us happy!  
SULPICE: Oh damn it, listen to me!

Reunited at last!  
Oh, how happy we three are together.  
What a joy! What a delight!  
Reunited in love and affection.

*(Text: Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges  
and Jean-François Bayard)*

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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.

### **Wesley Harrison – tenor**

Hailing from Windsor ON, Wesley Harrison, named in 2023 as one of CBC's "30 hot classical musicians under 30," is a tenor who holds his master's degree in opera and voice performance from McGill University as well as a bachelor in vocal performance from Wilfrid Laurier University. In 2022, before placing third in the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio Competition, he earned the Jacqueline Desmarais Foundation bursary, the Jean-Paul Jeannotte bursary; in 2021, he was also a finalist in the Wirth Vocal Prize. During his time in Montreal, Harrison was able to work with various local composers and companies such as Luna Pearl Woolf and Sortilegio and took great joy in the collaborative process of these workshops. Recent roles include Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* and Valcour in *L'amant anonyme* (Opera McGill). This season Harrison can be seen on the COC's mainstage performing as First Prisoner in *Fidelio* and Parpignol in *La Bohème*.

### **Karoline Podolak – soprano**

Toronto-born Polish-Canadian soprano Karoline Podolak holds a master's degree from the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Poland. She had her operatic debut at Silesian Opera House as Zuzia in Moniuszko's *Verbum Nobile*, and Adele in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*. Recent opera credits include Violetta in *La Traviata* at the National Opera and Ballet of Bulgaria, and Fire/Princess/Nightingale in Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* with Opéra de Montréal. Last season, Podolak was a member of the Atelier Lyrique of Opéra de Montréal. Since 2021, she has been a Jeune Ambassadeur Lyrique of Théâtre Lyricorégra 20. In 2022, she took home both the First Prize and the Audience Choice Award at the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio Competition. This past year, Podolak won a George and Nora London Foundation Award and Second Prize at the Loren L. Zachary Competition in Los Angeles.

### **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 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.

### **Korin Thomas-Smith – baritone**

Korin Thomas-Smith holds a Master of Music in Opera and a bachelor's in voice performance from the University of Toronto, and has completed a Master of Musical of Musical Arts at Yale University. Thomas-Smith is a past participant of the Ravinia Steans Music Festival, the Music Academy of the West, and the Rebanks Family Fellowship and International Performance Residency at the Royal Conservatory of Music. Recently, Thomas-Smith was a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival, performing as Argante in Handel's *Rinaldo*. In 2021, he was named one of CBC Music's "30 hot classical musicians under 30."

### **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

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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 repetiteur 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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