

FREE CONCERT SERIES IN THE RICHARD BRADSHAW AMPHITHEATRE

PRESENTED BY



VOCAL SERIES

May 8, 2024, 12 p.m.

LES ADIEUX

ARTISTS OF THE COC ENSEMBLE STUDIO

Charlotte Siegel, soprano
Queen Hezumuryango, mezzo-soprano
Brian Cho, piano
Mattia Senesi, piano

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
UNDERWRITTEN BY
THE CATHERINE AND MAXWELL MEIGHEN FOUNDATION

MAJOR SUPPORT FROM
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ARIAS: Canadian Opera Student Development Fund,
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Charlotte Siegel is generously sponsored by Joy Levine
Queen Hezumuryango is generously sponsored by Anne & Tony Arrell
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

Knoxville: Summer of 1915..... Samuel Barber
Charlotte Siegel | Brian Cho

“Air des lettres” (Werther) Jules Massenet
Queen Hezumuryango | Mattia Senesi

Trois chansons de Bilitis Claude Debussy
La flûte de Pan
La chevelure
Le tombeau des naïades
Queen Hezumuryango | Brian Cho

“Beim Schlafengehen” (Vier letzte Lieder) Richard Strauss
Charlotte Siegel | Mattia Senesi

“Mira, o Norma” (Norma) Vincenzo Bellini
Charlotte Siegel, Queen Hezumuryango | Mattia Senesi

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COMING UP NEXT AT THE FREE CONCERT SERIES

Thu. May 9, 2024 | 12-1 P.M.

INSTRUMENTAL SERIES

Chopin, Poetry, and Death

Ludmil Angelov, piano

Ludmil Angelov, one of the greatest contemporary interpreters of Chopin, presents some of the most emblematic works of the “genius of the piano.” Among the works is Chopin’s tragic “Poem of the death”—his Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor—as well some of his most emblematic preludes, mazurkas, nocturnes, and polonaises.

Tue. May 14, 2024 | 12-1 P.M.

INSTRUMENTAL SERIES

Dream

Tim Beattie, guitar

Dream celebrates some of the most evocative music written and adapted for the guitar, with works from across the ages and around the world. As the first guitarist ever invited to join the prestigious Rebanks Family Fellowship at The Royal Conservatory, Tim Beattie’s “guitar dazzles ... moving between textures and moods with ease” (*MusicWorks Magazine*). Beattie’s performance career has taken him to stages across North America and Europe, with recent appearances at the Bath Festival (England), Kitara Nova Helsinki (Finland), the Banff Centre for the Performing Arts (Alberta), among many others.

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...

Thu. May 30, 2024 | 12-1 P.M.

VOCAL SERIES

Les Adieux

Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio

Ariane Cossette, soprano

Alex Hetherington, mezzo-soprano

Mattia Senesi, piano

Brian Cho, piano

Ensemble Studio artists Ariane Cossette and Alex Hetherington reflect on their time at the COC through a lens of love, dreams, and longing. Enjoy a performance by these graduating artists as they take the opportunity to perform works they have always longed to sing.

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Knoxville: Summer of 1915 (op. 24)

It has become that time of evening
When people sit on their porches,
Rocking gently and talking gently
And watching the street
And the standing up into their sphere
Of possession of the trees,
Of birds' hung havens, hangars.
People go by; things go by.
A horse, drawing a buggy,
Breaking his hollow iron music on the asphalt;
A loud auto: a quiet auto;
People in pairs, not in a hurry,
Scuffling, switching their weight of aestival body,
Talking casually,
The taste hovering over them of vanilla,
Strawberry, pasteboard, and starched milk,
The image upon them of lovers and horsemen,
Squared with clowns in hueless amber.
A streetcar raising its iron moan;
Stopping;
Belling and starting, stertorous;
Rousing and raising again
Its iron increasing moan
And swimming its gold windows and straw seats
On past and past and past,
The bleak spark crackling and cursing above it
Like a small malignant spirit
Set to dog its tracks;
The iron whine rises on rising speed;
Still risen, faints; halts;
The faint stinging bell;
Rises again, still fainter;
Fainting, lifting lifts,
Faints foregone;
Forgotten.
Now is the night one blue dew
My father has drained,
He has coiled the hose
Low on the length of lawns,
A frailing of fire who breathes...
Parents on porches:
Rock and rock.

From damp strings morning glories hang their
ancient faces.

The dry and exalted noise of the locusts from all the
air
At once enchants my eardrums.
On the rough wet grass
Of the backyard
My father and mother have spread quilts
We all lie there, my mother, my father, my uncle, my
aunt,
And I too am lying there.
They are not talking much, and the talk is quiet,
Of nothing in particular,
Of nothing at all.
The stars are wide and alive,
They seem each like a smile
Of great sweetness,
And they seem very near.
All my people are larger bodies than mine,
With voices gentle and meaningless
Like the voices of sleeping birds.
One is an artist, he is living at home.
One is a musician, she is living at home.
One is my mother who is good to me.
One is my father who is good to me.
By some chance, here they are,
All on this earth;
And who shall ever tell the sorrow
Of being on this earth, lying, on quilts,
On the grass,
In a summer evening,
Among the sounds of the night.
May God bless my people,
My uncle, my aunt, my mother, my good father,
Oh, remember them kindly in their time of trouble;
And in the hour of their taking away.
After a little I am taken in
And put to bed.
Sleep, soft smiling,
Draws me unto her:
And those receive me,
Who quietly treat me,
As one familiar and well-beloved in that home:
But will not, oh, will not,
Not now, not ever;
But will not ever tell me who I am.

(Text: James Agee)

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Air des lettres (Letter Scene)

CHARLOTTE

Werther! Werther!

Who would have told me the place
Which in my heart he holds today?
Since he has left, in spite of myself,
Everything wearies me, and my soul is filled with him!
His letters! His letters!
Ah, I reread them constantly..
With what charm, but also what sadness!
I ought to destroy them...I can't!

"I am writing you from my little room.
A grey and heavy sky of December
Weighs on me like a shroud
And I am alone, always alone!"
Ah! Nobody with him!
Not a single bit of evidence
of tenderness or even of pity!
God! How did I come upon this sad courage
To order this exile and this isolation?

"Joyful cries of children rise
from beneath my window, cries of children!
And I think of the time so sweet when
All your dear little ones were playing around us.
They will forget me, perhaps?"

No Werther, in their memory,
Your image remains alive.
And when you return... but will he come back?

Ah! This last note freezes me and terrifies me!

"You said to me, 'Until Christmas,' and I said, 'Never!' "
One will soon know
Which of us was speaking truth... but
If I should reappear, on the fixed day, before you,
Do not accuse me, weep for me!
Do not accuse me, weep for me!
Yes, with those eyes so full of charm,
These lines, you will read them again,
And you will dampen them from your tears,
O Charlotte, and you will tremble,
You will tremble, you will tremble!

(Text: Édouard Blau, Paul Milliet and Georges Hartmann)

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La flûte de Pan (The flute of Pan)

For Hyacinthus day he gave me a syrinx made of carefully cut reeds, bonded with white wax which tastes sweet to my lips like honey.

He teaches me to play, as I sit on his lap; but I am a little fearful. He plays it after me, so gently that I scarcely hear him.

We have nothing to say, so close are we one to another, but our songs try to answer each other, and our mouths join in turn on the flute.

It is late; here is the song of the green frogs that begins with the night. My mother will never believe I stayed out so long to look for my lost sash.

La chevelure (The tresses of hair)

He said to me: 'Last night I dreamed. I had your tresses around my neck. I had your hair like a black necklace all round my nape and over my breast.

'I caressed it and it was mine; and we were united thus forever by the same tresses, mouth on mouth, just as two laurels often share one root.

'And gradually it seemed to me, so intertwined were our limbs, that I was becoming you, or you were entering into me like a dream.'

When he had finished, he gently set his hands on my shoulders and gazed at me so tenderly that I lowered my eyes with a shiver.

Le tombeau des naïades (The tomb of the Naiads)

Along the frost-bound wood I walked; my hair across my mouth, blossomed with tiny icicles, and my sandals were heavy with muddy, packed snow.

He said to me: 'What do you seek?' 'I follow the satyr's track. His little cloven hoof-marks alternate like holes in a white cloak.' He said to me: 'The satyrs are dead.

'The satyrs and the nymphs too. For thirty years there has not been so harsh a winter. The tracks you see are those of a goat. But let us stay here, where their tomb is.'

And with the iron head of his hoe he broke the ice of the spring, where the naiads used to laugh. He picked up some huge cold fragments, and, raising them to the pale sky, gazed through them.

*(Text: Pierre Louÿs
Translation: Richard Stokes)*

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Beim Schlafengehen (Upon Going to Sleep)

Now that day has made me tired,
My blissful yearning
Will welcome starry night
In friendship like a sleepy child.

Hands, rest from all your tasks,
Brow, forget all thinking
All my senses now
Want to sink in slumber.

And my unguarded soul
Wants to soar in freest flight
Within enchanted night time circles,
To live a thousand fold profoundly.

*(Text: Hermann Hesse
Translation: © David Paley)*

Mira, o Norma (See, oh Norma)

ADALGISA
Behold, o Norma, at your knees,
These dear, dear children!
Let pity for them move you,
If you feel no pity for yourself!

NORMA
Ah, why do you try to weaken me
With such soft feelings?
Such illusions, such hopes
Are not for one about to die!

ADALGISA
Relent, ah yield!

NORMA
Ah, leave me.
He loves you.

ADALGISA
And already he repents.

NORMA
And you?

ADALGISA
I loved him. Now I feel
Nothing but friendship.

NORMA
O my child! What will you do?

ADALGISA
Return to you what is yours,
Or hide myself, with you, from God and man
forever.

NORMA and ADALGISA
Yes, you have won. Embrace me.
I have found my friend again.
For the rest of my life
I shall always stay with you.
The earth is big enough
To shelter us both together.
Together with you, courageously,
We shall fight outrageous Destiny,
As long as in our breasts
Our loving hearts shall beat...

(Text: Gaetano Donizetti)

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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

Charlotte Siegel – soprano

Soprano and singer/songwriter Charlotte Siegel of Toronto holds a graduate diploma and a master's in opera and voice from McGill University, and bachelor of classical voice performance from the University of Toronto. Previously named to CBC's annual list of "30 hot classical musicians under 30," Siegel was recently featured in the COC's concert *In Winter*, as well as performed as Second Lady in *The Magic Flute*; her next COC roles are as Musetta in *La Bohème*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Lead Hen/Inkeeper's Wife in *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and First Handmaiden in *Medea*. Siegel completed Pacific Opera Victoria's inaugural Civic Engagement Quartet program, and was a Buffalo/Toronto District winner for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. In 2019, she placed third in the

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Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio Competition and was also a finalist for the Atelier Lyrique National Auditions. Off stage, Siegel is the co-founder and Managing Director of the Marigold Music Program.

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.

Brian Cho - piano

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

Mattia Senesi - piano

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.

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