

FREE CONCERT SERIES IN THE RICHARD BRADSHAW AMPHITHEATRE

PRESENTED BY



VOCAL SERIES

September 20, 2023, 12 p.m.

MEET THE ENSEMBLE STUDIO

ARTISTS OF THE COC ENSEMBLE STUDIO

Ariane Cossette, soprano
Karoline Podolak, soprano
Charlotte Siegel, soprano
Alex Hetherington, mezzo-soprano
Queen Hezumuryango, mezzo-soprano
Wesley Harrison, tenor
Korin Thomas-Smith, baritone
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



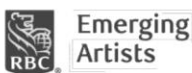
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FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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Ariane Cossette is generously sponsored by Anne & Tony Arrell
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Programming is subject to change. For complete up-to-date listings, and to sign up for email updates, visit coc.ca/FreeConcerts.

THE PROGRAM

- “Svegliatevi nel core” (*Julius Caesar in Egypt*)**..... George Frideric Handel
Queen Hezumuryango | Mattia Senesi
- “Bella siccome un angelo” (*Don Pasquale*)**.....Gaetano Donizetti
Korin Thomas-Smith | Brian Cho
- “Wie du warst! Wie du bist” (*Der Rosenkavalier*)**.....Richard Strauss
Alex Hetherington | Brian Cho
- “O amore, vieni a me!” (*Medea*)**Luigi Cherubini
Ariane Cossette | Mattia Senesi
- “Meine lippen, sie küssen so heiß” (*Giuditta*)**.....Franz Lehár
Charlotte Siegel | Mattia Senesi
- “Ecco, ridente in cielo” (*The Barber of Seville*)**.....Gioachino Rossini
Wesley Harrison | Brian Cho
- “Je suis Titania la blonde” (*Mignon*)**Ambroise Thomas
Karoline Podolak | Mattia Senesi

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COMING UP NEXT AT THE FREE CONCERT SERIES

Thu. Sep. 21, 2023, 12–1 p.m.

INSTRUMENTAL SERIES

Artists of the COC Orchestra: Strings

Effort and Ease with Mozart, Puccini, and Britten

Artists from the COC Orchestra celebrate the start of the Free Concert Series season with an exciting selection of works. Including Mozart's Divertimento in D major, Puccini's Crisantemi and Britten's Simple Symphony, this performance will highlight the expressivity of the COC's own string section.

Wed. Sep. 27, 2023, 12–1 p.m.

VOCAL SERIES

UofT Opera

Mostly Mozart

UofT Opera presents a concert of beloved operatic ensembles by Mozart, augmented by works inspired by the man widely recognized as “one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music.”

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...

Mon. Nov. 27, 2023, 12–1 p.m.

VOCAL SERIES

Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio

Liebeslieder Waltzes

Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio explore life, love, humour, and whimsy in a performance of Brahms' Liebeslieder Waltzes, Op. 52, counterpointed with John Greer's Liebesleid-Lieder, Op. 20, with text by Dorothy Parker.

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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

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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.

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*.

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*.

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.

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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.

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.

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 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.

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,

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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 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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