Il Viaggio a Reims
By Gioachino Rossini
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts
October 17 2020
A Message from Prof. Nancy Hermiston, Director of UBC Opera

Dear UBC Opera Ensemble Supporters and Audience Members,

These are extraordinary times for all of us and nothing in life seems simple anymore. Certainly, producing opera in this COVID-19 pandemic is not an easy task but we felt it was a very important task for all of us. Not only is it an essential and mandatory part of our student’s opera education, but it is an essential element of our cultural life at UBC and in Vancouver.

Keeping our distance, singing with masks, lots of handwashing and disinfectant wipes and being extra careful not to come to rehearsals or performances if you even have the slightest hint of a sniffle, while trying to always maintain a positive attitude during these difficult times, is all part of daily life in COVID times. Safety plans and revisions of safety plans, revisions and more revisions, waiting, hoping, along with great frustration — all are part of producing opera in COVID times.

Instead of having our usual 65 singers on stage we are juggling the space so that there are no more than 15 singers at a time. Learning how to communicate emotions and relationships at a 3-metre distance is stretching all the acting and singing technique we have. However, in the end, the joy of being together on the operatic stage once again overshadows all of the trials and tribulations of getting there. We were all truly moved and ecstatic to be performing on the stage of our beloved Old Aud once again!
All seemed to be going well until another unexpected catastrophe occurred — the unthinkable! At 5:45 a.m. on Friday Oct. 9, due to a technical failure, a curtain of water flooded out from the deluge system over the proscenium of the Old Aud. The stage piano was totally destroyed. The stage and orchestra pit were completely flooded; the Greenroom was also totally flooded, in addition to water damage to other basement areas. Thanks to the quick thinking of our Vancouver firefighters, who luckily found some plastic and covered the Steinway Grand, this wonderful old instrument, situated in the Greenroom at the time, only suffered minor water damage and is able to be saved.

Repairs have already begun and as heartbreaking as this damage is, it could have been much worse. We will do our best to keep you informed as repairs progress.

But we must not forget that Rossini’s wonderful music can span any distance and any difficulty. His opera *Il Viaggio a Reims* is no exception. With the talent and energy of our UBC singers, that beautiful opera, with its daredevil coloratura, beautiful melodies and rich ensemble writing, will carry you out of this pandemic woe. We hope that this opera will give you some joy and that soon we will be able to welcome you in person to our performances once again.

The show will [stream live online](https://example.com) from the Chan Centre on Oct 16th, 17th, and 18th at 7:30 p.m. Pacific Time. Please join us from wherever you are!

I would like to thank the administration and staff of School of Music, The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts and the Faculty of Arts. In particular I want to express my deepest gratitude to
Assistant Dean Gerald Vanderwoude for his tireless work in finding us a venue for our performances this weekend. He and his team have been — and still are — spearheading the safety plans for the Faculty of Arts and are dedicated to making certain that the student learning experiences and safety are of the highest possible quality during these difficult times. In the midst of that mammoth job, he found time to ensure that the opera performances and education of our students could continue. He made it possible for us to present our performances this weekend at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts. We will be forever grateful to him.

I also applaud and have great admiration for the courage of the students, faculty and staff of UBC Opera and our internationally renowned guest conductor, David Agler. Together we are making sure that the show will go on!

Professor Nancy Hermiston
Director, UBC Opera
David Agler served as the Artistic Director for Ireland’s Wexford Festival Opera from 2005–2019. He has served as Artistic Director for Opera Festival of New Jersey, Music Director for Vancouver Opera, Principal Conductor for the Australian Opera, Resident Conductor for San Francisco Opera, Principal Guest Conductor for Oper der Stadt Köln, and conductor and Administrator for the Spoleto Festival.

Mr. Agler has led several premieres including the U.S. premiere of a chamber orchestra version of Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck*, a newly revised version of Ned Rorem’s opera *Miss Julie*, John Harbison’s *Winter’s Tale*, and the world premiere of William Bolcom’s opera *Dinner at Eight* for Minnesota Opera and Wexford Festival Opera. For the University of British Columbia, he conducted the first performance of *Dream Healer* by Lloyd Burrit.

As Music Director for Vancouver Opera, Mr. Agler earned particular acclaim for productions of repertoire from the twentieth century, including *Peter Grimes*, *The Makropoulos Case*, *Les dialogues des Carmélites*, *Jenůfa*, *Bluebeard’s Castle*, *Erwartung* and the Canadian premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s opera *Susannah*.

Throughout David Agler’s career, he has been involved with the education of young singers. He has had ongoing associations with UBC, The Banff Centre for the Arts, and The Curtis Institute.
Canadian-born lyric coloratura soprano Nancy Hermiston has performed throughout Europe and North America. Parallel to her extensive singing career, Ms. Hermiston worked as voice teacher, stage director, and Co-coordinator with the University of Toronto’s Opera and Performance Divisions. In 1995, she joined the University of British Columbia’s School of Music as the Head of the Voice and Opera Divisions, where she established the UBC Opera Ensemble.

Professor Hermiston is also a favourite guest for master classes throughout Canada, the United States, China, and Germany. Her UBC Opera Ensemble tours regularly to the Czech Republic, Germany, Ontario, and throughout British Columbia. The Opera Ensemble gave their first performances in Beijing and Chengdu in May of 2009, and Shanghai in 2010 and 2011. Ms. Hermiston appeared as Stage Director with the Regina Opera for The Barber of Seville and La Cenerentola and with the Vancouver Opera twice for Die Fledermaus, then La Traviata, La Bohème and in 2016, directed their production of Verdi’s Rigoletto, starring UBC Alumna and her former student, Simone Osborne.

In 2004, Professor Hermiston was named the UBC University Marshal, and in 2008, UBC awarded her the Dorothy Somerset Award for Performance and Development in the Visual and Performing Arts. She was also honoured with a Killam Teaching prize in 2010. In October 2011, she received an Opera Canada Rubie Award for her contributions to opera in Canada. Ms. Hermiston was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in December 2013. In 2017, she was awarded the Canadian Music Centre’s BC Award of Excellence and in November 2017, Alumni UBC recognized Professor Hermiston with the Honorary Alumnus Award. In 2018, she received the Faculty of Arts 2017/18 Dean of Arts Award for her outstanding contributions to UBC’s creative research, teaching, and service to the scholarly and broader community, and was inducted into the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame.
Maddalena
Kari Rutherford

Kari Rutherford is a mezzo soprano hailing from Flin Flon, Manitoba. Rutherford received her Bachelors in Voice Performance from Brandon University and is currently taking a Masters of Opera from the University of British Columbia.

Don Prudenzio
Elvin Do

Elvin Do is a Canadian Bass/Baritone with an Hons. BMUS from Wilfrid Laurier University (Ont. Canada), and is currently pursuing a MMUS from the University of British Columbia's School of Music. He was described as a strong supporting artist by Opera Canada for his operatic debut: Grandpa Moss in Copland's The Tenderland with WLU Opera. He is excited to work with UBC opera in its 2020/21 season singing the role of Don Prudenzio in Rossini's Il viaggio a reims.
Hanwen Liang, a Chinese lyric baritone, is a fourth-year opera performance major undergraduate at UBC. After being granted a bachelor degree of pharmacy by Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, he immigrated to Canada with his family. Before that, he had won several awards, including three first prizes of National Art Student Competition. In addition, he served as assistant conductor of Peiyang Chorus of Tianjin University and University Chorus of Shanghai University of T.C.M. In 2017, he was accepted into the School of Music at the Kwantlen Polytechnic University to study vocal music with Gail Suderman, and started to pursue his desire for classical music. After that, he was admitted by the School of Music at UBC and began studying with Dale Throness in 2018.

Catherine Thornsley is a second year Master’s student studying under the direction of Nancy Hermiston. Born and raised in Flagstaff, Arizona, Catherine began studying voice with Dr. Judith Cloud at the age of 16. After graduating high school she began pursuing a degree in Vocal performance at Northern Arizona University. Throughout her undergraduate career, she participated in the Opera program and sang the role of the Countess Almaviva in Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro her senior year. After graduation, Catherine moved to Seattle, where she took a hiatus from opera. After some gentle nudging from her supportive family, Catherine decided that it was time to reignite her passion for opera and was lucky enough to be
accepted into the University of British Columbia’s opera program. In February 2020, Catherine had the enormous privilege to perform in the *The Passenger* portraying the character of Marta.

**La Contessa di Folleville**

*Maya Goell*

Maya Goell is thrilled and grateful to be making music again singing the role of La Contessa di Folleville. She is currently in the fourth year of her undergraduate degree studying under Nancy Hermiston. She began her operatic training at the San Francisco School of the Arts where she studied voice with Rhoslyn Jones. There, she became a National Youngarts Foundation winner and California State Art Scholar. Maya made her solo debut with UBC Opera in her first year as Gherardino in *Gianni Schicchi* and the young lover in *Il Tabarro*. As part of the UBC Opera Chorus, she has enjoyed special ensemble roles such as a demon in *Don Giovanni*, a dancing bird woman and fire in *Die Zauberflöte*, and a pedestal doll in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. She was most recently seen last season as Yvette in *Pasażerka*.

**Modestina**

*Hannah Ernst*

Hannah is a third year undergraduate soprano from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. She has sung with the chorus in three previous UBC Opera productions including *Die Zauberflöte*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and *Pasażerka*. This is her fourth production with the ensemble, and her first time appearing in a featured role. Before coming to UBC, Hannah performed in both musical theatre and opera, including singing the role Mrs.Sem in The Maritime Concert Opera’s production of Noye’s *Flud* and the title role in *Anne of Green Gables*. 
### Don Luigino
Ming-Xuan Chung

Ming-Xuan started his musical endeavours at the piano at the age of 6, eventually completing his LTCL in piano performance. He didn’t come to singing until he joined the Simon Fraser University Choir, completing his BSc at SFU. Having discovered his passion for singing and Opera during his time in the UBC Summer Voice Workshop, he has sung with local companies like Opera Opulenza in Cavalleria Rusticana, Les Contes d’Hoffmann, NSLOS’ production of Die Fledermaus, Once Upon a Mattress, Steward in Into the Woods. Burnaby Lyric Opera’s production of Il Barbiere di Siviglia as Fiorello, chorus in L’elisir D’amore, Prince Yamadori in Madama Butterfly, Heroic Opera’s production of Elektra, Macbeth, and Opera Mariposa’s production of Un Ballo in Maschera as the Judge. As a pianist, he regularly plays for the Beacon Unitarian Church. He is currently a second year Opera Performance Major at UBC studying with Dale Throness.

### Il Barone di Trombonok
Yuhui Wang

Yuhui Wang, a Chinese baritone, is doing his fourth year of DMA at the University of British Columbia, where he is studying with one of Canada’s most versatile baritones, Peter Barcza. Since moving to North America, Yuhui has performed leading roles including: Escamillio in *Carmen*; Taddeo in *L’Italiana in Algeri*; Dandini in *La Cenerentola*; Harlequin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*; and Horstmayer in *Silent Night*; Daperttuto in *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*. In *Il Viaggio a Reims*, Yuhui will be performing the role of *Barone*.
Nathon Irving is a first year master’s student studying under the tutelage of J. Patrick Raftery. Nathon originates from Brampton, Ontario and began studying classical voice at Mayfield Secondary School located in Caledon, Ontario. There they dabbled in vocal jazz and musical theatre. Nathon decided to continue studying music and received their undergraduate degree in voice performance with a minor in dance from The University of Western Ontario. During Nathon’s undergraduate degree, they found their passion for opera. From 2016-2020, Nathon studied various roles such as, Maestro Spinellooccio in Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*, Moralés in Bizet’s *Carmen*; Bartolo in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and The Mikado in Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta of the same name. Nathon is excited to play Don Profondo in this production of *Il Viaggio a Reims* and looks forward to future productions, here at the University of British Columbia.

Thomas has been acting and singing all his life, playing such characters as Bernardo in *West Side Story*, Captain Edward Smith in *Titanic*, and Jacob in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream-coat*. Thomas was also a choral scholar at the King’s College Chapel Choir in Halifax, Nova Scotia, under the direction of five-time Grammy Award winner Paul Halley. He is the recipient of the Sheila K. Piercey Rose Bowl, the Althea and Carl Ritcey Memorial Award, the Opera Nova Scotia Open Solo Vocal Award, and the Early Music Society of Nova Scotia Award. In 2017, Thomas made his Operatic debut with the Halifax Summer Opera Festival, playing Superintendent Budd in Benjamin Britten’s *Albert Herring*, returning in 2018 to portray Nick Bottom and Peter Quince in his *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. At UBC, Thomas has played Hermann in Offenbach’s *The Tales of Hoffman*, and he is delighted to be portraying Don Alvaro this year. He currently studies voice at UBC with James Patrick Raftery.
La Marchesa Melibea
Danielle Nicholson

Danielle Nicholson, a recent graduate of the University of Toronto (BMUS, Voice Honours), and she has earned an ARCT Performer’s Diploma in Voice (First Class Honours Distinction) from The Royal Conservatory of Music (2017). She has studied under Katherine Vam Kampen, Daniel Taylor, Jean MacPhail and now Dale Throness. Notable performances include being a soloist in Handel’s Messiah with the Peterborough Singers (2019) and in Mozart’s Requiem with the Toronto Youth Choir (2020). With U of T Opera she understudied in Dove’s Mansfield Park, and appeared in Weill’s Street Scene, and Mozart’s Le Nozze di Figaro. In March 2019, the top prize in the AADGT Festival & Competition led to her debut at Carnegie Hall in the Winners’ Recital at Weill Hall. In May 2018, she debuted as Dorabella in Mozart's Così fan tutte with the Toronto Lyric Opera Centre. Danielle is thrilled to be pursuing her Masters in Opera Performance with UBC Opera.

Il Conte di Libenskof
Ian McCloy

Ian is currently studying Opera Performance in the Diploma program here at UBC. He has been a part of nearly every UBC Opera production for the past 7 years. His past role credits include "Nikolaus Sprink" in Kevin Puts' Silent Night, "Tamino" in Mozart's The Magic Flute, "Don Ottavio" in Mozart's Don Giovanni, and most recently Hoffmann in Offenbach’s The Tales of Hoffmann. He has also performed a number of times in the Czech Republic. His roles there include "Count Almaviva" in Rossini’s The Barber of Seville, "Lindoro" in Rossini’s Italian Girl in Algiers, and "Tamino" in Mozart's The Magic Flute. Ian is
thrilled to be back performing as "Count Libenskof" with UBC Opera.

Corinna
Emma Jang

Soprano Emma Jang is currently in the first year of her graduate degree at UBC, majoring in Opera Performance. She previously studied with Rhoslyn Jones and Heidi Melton, and is now under the tutelage of Krisztina Szabo. Born and raised in Vancouver, Emma began taking piano lessons and singing in choirs at a young age. Outside of UBC, Emma has performed the role of First Witch in Dido and Aeneas with Players and Singers and understudied Dukdukdiya in Goullet's Flight of the Hummingbird with Vancouver Opera and Pacific Opera Victoria. She most recently appeared in UBC Opera's production of Die Zauberflöte as First Spirit and Papagena, as well as singing in the chorus for Les Contes d'Hoffmann and Pasažerka.

Lord Sidney
Philip Wing

Born and raised in Vancouver, Philip Wing is a first year Masters student in Opera Performance. He gained his first vocal experience in school and youth choirs, then spent two years in the undergraduate voice program at UBC before transferring into opera to complete his degree. His first role was as a dead body in UBC Opera's 2018 production of Puccini's Gianni Schicchi, and he likes to think he's been moving up in the world since then. He subsequently portrayed the French General in Puts' Silent Night followed by Masetto in Mozart's Don Giovanni (UBC Opera). Philip has also sung the role of Sarastro from Mozart's Die Zauberflöte in Teplice, Czech Republic (UBC).
Opera/European Music Academy, 2019) followed by Crespel in Offenbach’s *The Tales of Hoffmann* (UBC Opera). Most recently, Philip portrayed SS Officer 1 in Weinberg’s *The Passenger* (UBC Opera). He hopes you are thoroughly entertained by Rossini’s *Il Viaggio a Reims*

**Il Cavaliere Belfiore**

Dae Hyun Justin Cho

Dae Hyun Justin Cho is a Korean-born tenor in his second year of master’s degree studying under the direction of Peter Barcza. Mr. Cho made his UBC main stage debut as Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi* and since then appeared as Jonathan Dale in Kevin Puts’ *Silent Night* by, Don Ottavio in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, and Frantz in Offenbach’s *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*. He has also appeared as a soloist in UBC Opera’s Bard on the Beach concerts. Outside of UBC, he was a soloist with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra in their 2017 and 2018 Traditional Christmas concert series. In summer of 2019, he travelled to Teplice, Czech Republic to sing Tamino in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* with the European Music Academy. Most recently, he was an understudy for Vancouver Opera and Pacific Opera Victoria’s co-production of *The Flight of the Hummingbird*, and appeared as a soloist for local opera company Opera Opulenza.

**Delia**

Neusha Amir-Rahmani

Neusha Amir-Rahmani is a fourth year undergraduate student, getting a bachelors in Opera Performance at the University of British Columbia. She has been studying voice for 6 years and decided to pursue opera fairly early on. She has been a part of five operas during her time at UBC; however, this is her first role, and she is very excited to have the opportunity to take her first step into performing opera. Neusha has worked with a few different teachers through her study, and has also been a part of a Masterclass with Layla Claire. She is looking forward to working with many more people throughout the years.
Zefirino & Gelsomino
Gabriel Chona Rueda

Gabriel Chona Rueda is a young tenor and is beginning his first year as a part of the UBC school of music. He began singing when he joined the Calgary Boy's Choir at eight years old. He has performed in several musical theatre productions such as Beauty and the Beast, The King and I, Heathers, The Sound of Music, and The Pirates of Penzance. This is his first opera performance and he is excited to continue to study and perform at UBC.