Il Viaggio a Reims
By Gioachino Rossini

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

October 18 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 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
Conductor
David Agler

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 Makropolous 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.
Director
Nancy Hermiston

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
Alyssa Nicole Samson

Alyssa Nicole Samson is a Filipinx-Canadian mezzo soprano from Vancouver, British Columbia. She is currently in her first year of the Master of Music in Opera program at the University of British Columbia (UBC) studying under the tutelage of Krisztina Szabó. She holds a Bachelor of Music (2020) from UBC, a diploma certificate in Voice and Italian (2019) from the Universität Mozarteum Sommerakademie in Salzburg, and a Diploma in Music (2017) from Capilano University. Alyssa has performed as soloist with various groups including UBC Opera, the UBC University Singers and the Capilano University Singers. Her most recent engagements with UBC Opera include Bronka in the Canadian premiere of Pasažerka (Weinberg), Mercedes in Carmen (Bizet) at Bard on the Beach, and Third Lady and Third Spirit in Die Zauberflöte (Mozart).

Don Prudenzio
Rafael Laurindo

Rafael Laurindo is a current Doctor of Musical Arts student in Voice, at UBC, studying with Peter Bracza. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Universidade Federal da Paraiba, in Brazil, his first master’s degree and an Artist’s Diploma in Vocal Performance at Campbellsville University, in the United States, and a second master’s degree, in Opera, at UBC. In Brazil, Mr. Laurindo was a soloist in the early music ensemble Grupo Camena. In the United States, he performed the roles of Balthazar in Menotti’s Amahl and the Night Visitors, Gianni Schicchi in Puccini’s homonymous opera, and Don Alfonso in Mozart’s Cosi fan tutte. At UBC, he has appeared in Puccini’s Gianni Schicchi, as Alidoro in Rossini’s La Cenerentola, as Ponchel in Puts’ Silent Night, as Papageno in Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte, as Crespel in
Offenbach’s *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and as Tadeusz in Weinberg’s *Pasażerka*.

**Antonio**

Hans Grunwald

Hans is 18 years old, and is a first-year Baritone at the University of British Columbia. Coming from Northern California, Hans competed and placed in various high-level high-school classical and musical theatre competitions. In 2020, Hans placed second in the California Chapter of the Schmidt Vocal Arts competition, and first in the Cal-western Regional NATS competition for Musical Theatre. In their 2019-2020 season, Hans performed with the Santa Cruz Chorale, led by world-famous Conductor, Christian Grube. Though many performance opportunities halted due to COVID-19, Hans looks forward to a bright future at UBC

**Madama Cortese**

Julia Johnstone

Canadian soprano, Julia Johnstone studied voice performance at Kwantlen Polytechnic University before earning a Bachelor of Music in Opera Performance from The University of British Columbia. She is currently in her second year of UBC’s Diploma in Performance program where she studies under Dale Throness. Julia’s past roles include Zweite Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* (UBC Opera, European Music Academy) and Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro* (VIVace Summer Opera Workshop.) Julia is also a private voice teacher in Langley, BC. In addition to her work with UBC Opera and teaching, Julia frequently performs throughout her community at events such as Remembrance Day and convocation ceremonies, concerts and private recitals.
La Contessa di Folleville
Allison Anderson

A native of Houston, Texas, Ms. Anderson is a Doctoral Candidate at UBC, where she currently serves as a Graduate Teaching Assistant of Voice. She is a recent graduate of the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati (CCM), where she earned her Master of Music in Voice performance. Allison made her CCM stage debut as Suor Genovieffa in Suor Angelica, and most recently as Flora in The Turn of the Screw. Allison received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Voice Performance in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at Carnegie Mellon University. Her roles at CMU Opera include Adele, (Die Fledermaus), the title role in Cavalli’s La Calisto, and Zerlina (Don Giovanni). Allison began her early music training as a studio member of the Houston Grand Opera: High School Voice Studio. Allison’s voice teachers include Professor Daniel Teadt CMU, Dr. Gwendolyn Detwiler CCM, and most recently J. Patrick Raftery with whom she currently studies at UBC.

Modestina
Kate Fraser

Mezzo soprano Kate Fraser was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta. Kate has recently completed her Bachelors of Music in Opera at UBC under the tutelage of Heidi Melton and Rhoslyn Jones. This fall, she began her Masters of Music in Opera studying with Krisztina Szabo. Kate began studying classical music at a young age, participating in multiple choirs, piano lessons and of course, voice lessons. She participated in the UBC Summer Vocal Workshop in the summers of 2014-2016 as well as the Cowtown Opera Academy in 2014. Past credits in UBC Opera’s productions include Second Spirit in Mozart's Die Zauberflöte, Vlasta in the Canadian premiere of Weinberg’s Pasażerka, and chorus in Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin, Glück’s Orfeo ed Euridice, and Offenbach’s Les Contes d’Hoffmann.
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 in UBC.

Connor Hoppenbrouwers

Edmonton-born baritone Connor Hoppenbrouwers completed a performance diploma at Red Deer College before returning to his hometown to complete his undergraduate degree at The University of Alberta. Currently in his first year of the Masters of Music in Opera program at The University of British Columbia, Connor is currently studying with J. Patrick Raftery. Connor has enjoyed many performance opportunities including working with Edmonton Opera for the productions of *La Traviata* (2018) and *Rigoletto* (2019) as well as productions with The University of Alberta’s Opera Workshop, The Balm Society and the Mysterious Barricades Foundation. A talented instrumentalist as well, Connor can be seen performing on upright bass with orchestras, big bands and jazz combo groups across Alberta.
Don Profondo
Liam Robertson

Liam Robertson is excited to perform the role of Don Profundo in *Il viaggio a Reims*. Liam is currently in his Masters at UBC and is studying with Peter Barcza. His Roles and performances to date at UBC include SS-Man in *The Passenger*, The Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, British Major in *Silent Night*, Opera & Arias: Bold and Beautiful- Bard on the Beach, Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*, Osmin from *Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail* at UBC’s Opera Tea, Truffaldino in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and Snug in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Liam has appeared as young Ralph in the Echo Players production of *The Last Romance* in Qualicum. He has performed in the chorus of Vancouver Island Opera’s productions of *Rigoletto*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *My Fair Lady*. He has also performed in Opera Nanaimo’s Opera Gems and Voices in the Vineyard concerts.

Don Alvaro
Max Smith

Don Alvaro is Max's first lead role in an opera! In fact his only other experience in opera was singing chorus in Silent Night with UBC opera two years ago. Before coming to university, Max performed in plays and musical theatre all around the lower mainland. With companies such as Theatre In the Country, Tomo Suru productions, Align Entertainment, Theatre West Van, and Rainforest Theatre. The switch from musical theatre to opera was a strange one, but one he would never go back on. Max fell in love with classical music almost immediately, and he hopes you enjoy this music as well!
La Marchesa Melibea
Carleigh Ross

Carleigh Ross is a mezzo-soprano in the last year of her undergraduate. She started studying classical singing at age 14 in New York, and decided to continue her operatic education at UBC. Since starting school, she has had four mainstage roles (Third Lady and Third Spirit in *Die Zauberflote*, Mother in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Hannah in *The Passenger*) and has been involved in six opera productions in the chorus. Ross has participated in mezzo-soprano Katherine Ciesinski’s masterclass in October 2018, and has most recently sung for Sondra Radvanovsky in her masterclass in October 2019. She has also toured with the VSO as a featured soloist for the VSO “A Traditional Christmas” concerts. In Summer 2019, she travelled with UBC to Czech Republic and performed Third Lady and Third Spirit, as well as having lead roles in Vancouver’s own Bard on the Beach.

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 "Nkolaus 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
Sarah Anderson-Caulfield

Sarah Anderson-Caulfield is pursuing a B.Mus in Opera. While at UBC, she has appeared as Donna Anna (Don Giovanni) and Giulietta (Les Contes d'Hoffmann). Another highlight came in performing as a soloist with the Vancouver Symphony in their touring Traditional Christmas concerts. While studying at Kwantlen Polytechnic, she performed Handel's Messiah (with the Borealis string ensemble), Mozart’s Vesperae solennes de confessione, Schubert’s Messe in G, and a recital with harpist Alexa Reimer. Within the trio Erdenlied (with Andrea Pedro, piano & Benjamin MacRae, clarinet) she won the Senior Canadian Chamber category at the 2017 BC Provincial music festival. Prior performances include Handel's Dixit Dominus and Papagena in The Magic Flute, both with the Chilliwack Symphony.

Sarah is the grateful recipient of the Harry and Marjorie Anne Slim Scholarship, the Guttman-Dales Award, and the Norah Mansell Scholarship from the UBC Faculty of Music. When not singing, she enjoys crafts, trivia, and spending time outdoors.

Lord Sidney
Matthew McLellan

Matthew McLellan comes from Kelowna, B.C., where he studied with Katherine van Kampen before applying to UBC. He is a MMUS bass studying under Nancy Hermiston. His first role at UBC was Antonio in The Marriage of Figaro followed by l'Hotelier in Manon, Testaccio in Eine Nacht in Venedig, Snug in Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream, Mr. Kofner in Menotti's The Consul, Zaretsky in Eugene Onegin, Colline in La bohème, Don Basilio in Il barbiere di Siviglia, Truffaldino in Ariadne auf Naxos, Alidoro in La Cenerentola,
il Talpa in *Il Tabarro*, Simone in *Gianni Schicchi*, Father Palmer in *Silent Night*, Sprecher and Zweiter Geharnischter in *Die Zauberflöte*. His most recent roles include Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, as well as Lindorf and Coppelius in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. He is performing the role of Lord Sidney in *Il Viaggio a Reims*.

**Il Cavaliere Belfiore**

Jackson Allen grew up in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, where childhood piano lessons kindled his passion for music. In high school, he started seriously taking an interest in classical music and opera. He now studies with Nancy Hermiston as a fourth-year undergraduate student at UBC. Past teachers include Rhoslyn Jones and Sarah Gartshore. Jackson has greatly enjoyed his experiences in community theatre, operetta, and oratorio, notably as the tenor soloist in Handel's Messiah with the Sault Symphony Orchestra. Highlights from past years performing with UBC Opera have included concerts in Vancouver, Germany, and the Czech Republic, and the roles of Spalanzani and Nathanaël in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, First Priest and Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Song-seller and Gherardo in *Il tabarro/Gianni Schicchi*. Despite the myriad difficulties we have all come up against these past months, Jackson is delighted to finally be able to make music again with such fantastic colleagues!

**Delia**

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

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.