Il Viaggio a Reims
By Gioachino Rossini
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts
October 16 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 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.
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 *Pasażerka* (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 Paraíba, 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
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.

Leila has sung the role of the First Lady in Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* for the Teplice European Music Academy in the Czech Republic, The Secretary in Gian Carlo Menotti’s *The Consul*, Arminda in Mozart’s *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe*, Donna Anna in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, Giulietta in Offenbach’s *Les Contes d’Hoffmann*, and most recently as SS officer Anna-Liese Franz in the Canadian premier of Mieczyslaw Weinberg’s *The Passenger*. Leila is currently continuing with her diploma studies at UBC while studying with Dale Throness.
La Contessa di Folleville
Emma Petersen Melland

Emma Petersen Melland is in the second year of her master’s degree at the University of British Columbia, studying opera performance. She received her Bachelor's of Music in Voice from the University of Arizona in 2019. Her recent roles include Yvette in Weinberg’s *The Passenger*, Orpheus in Offenbach’s *Orpheus in the Underworld*, La Fee in Massenet’s *Cendrillon*, as well as understudying the roles of Lucia in Britten’s *The Rape of Lucretia* and Olympia in *Les Contes D'Hoffmann*. She has participated in masterclasses with renowned musicians such as Jane Archibald, Barbara Bonney, Sasha Cook, Heidi Stober, Jennifer Johnson-Cano, and Corinne Winters. She has performed in and participated in the University of Miami Frost School of music’s summer program in Salzburg, Austria, and she attended Taos Opera Institute in 2018.

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 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.

Matthew Kim is a baritone studying at the University of British Columbia and is in the second year of his masters. Matthew began his musical career at an early age singing in choirs in middle and high school. He began taking voice lessons and singing opera at the age of 16. Since starting at UBC, Matthew has performed 9 operatic roles onstage. Most notably these include, Dr. Miracle and Counsellor Lindorf from Les contes d’Hoffmann, Leporello in Don Giovanni, William Dale in Silent Night, Harlekin in Ariadne auf Naxos, and Theseus in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Il Barone di Trombonok will be Matthew’s tenth role on stage. Matthew has begun his professional career already, singing concerts with Opera Unbound and Opera Opulenza. He is currently applying to young artists and summer programs in preparation for his graduation from UBC.
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 Entführung 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
Taryn Plater

Mezzo-soprano Taryn Plater’s involvement in opera is multifaceted as she possesses an affinity for both performance and production. This winter, Taryn was applauded for her “dramatic and vocal thrust” ([Opera Canada](https://www.operacanada.ca)) while singing the titular character in UBC Opera’s Canadian premiere of *Pasażerka*. A recipient of an encouragement award at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, she has performed with Opera NUOVA, the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, and featured in concerts in both Germany and the Czech Republic with UBC Opera. Taryn enjoys a variety of performance opportunities, from solo work with Opera Opulenza to entertaining on jazz piano and vocals. In addition to her performance endeavours, Taryn works as Marketing & Communications Assistant at the Chan Centre and enjoys applying her arts management experience to the production of her own concerts. This year, she is completing her opera performance diploma while simultaneously studying business management.

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
Magdalena How

Coloratura soprano Magdalena How is in the final year of her M.Mus in Opera Performance and feels so fortunate to be studying at UBC with Nancy Hermiston. Having loved music all her life, Magdalena participated in choirs and musical theatre in school productions and extra-curricular programs before falling in love with opera. Her recent credits include: Olympia in Offenbach’s Les Contes d’Hoffmann (UBC Opera), Queen of the Night in Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte (European Music Academy), Zerlina in Mozart’s Don Giovanni, and Anna Sørensen in Puts’ Silent Night (UBC Opera). Magdalena also enjoys singing at events around Vancouver, her hometown; she is thrilled to be performing Corinna in Il Viaggio a Reims with UBC Opera and looks forward to singing in Thibaudeau’s Phantom of the Opera with the Kamloops Symphony Orchestra later this month. Magdalena wishes everyone health and happiness in this challenging time. Despite everything, the show must go on…line!

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
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

Roshaan Saulnier

Roshaan has trained as a singer and dancer for nearly twenty years, and is incredibly proud to be a part of the UBC Opera Ensemble. She is in the fourth year of her Bachelor of Music, and has loved every minute of her experience at UBC. Roshaan is an active member of the Vancouver theatre scene, having been a part of several seasons with Theatre Under the Stars, and working on the creative team of some student-run productions on campus at UBC. She is very excited to be a part of this production of Viaggio, especially considering the year that we have all had. Roshaan believes it is important that the theatre and music industries maintain their place in society through thick and thin. There is nothing like a night at the opera.
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.