Il viaggio a Reims
(The Journey to Reims)

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

Dramma giocoso in One Act

Music by Gioachino Rossini | Libretto by Luigi Balocchi

October 16, 17, 18 at 7:30 pm

Performed at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts and streamed live to your location!

Conductor – David Agler
Director – Nancy Hermiston
Lighting Design – Jeremy Baxter
Costume Design – Parvin Mirhady
Technical Director – Grant Windsor

UBC Opera Ensemble
Pianists – Tina Chang (October 16, 18), Richard Epp (October 17)

There will be no intermission during the approximately 100-minute performance.

This production is made possible by the David Spencer Endowment Encouragement Fund

We acknowledge that the University of British Columbia is situated on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.

More information at ubcopera.com
Dear UBC Opera Ensemble Supporters
and Audience Members,

These are extraordinary times for all of us, and nothing in life seems simple anymore. Indeed, producing opera in this COVID-19 pandemic is not an easy task, but we felt it was a critical task for us all. Not only is it an essential and mandatory part of our students’ 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, taking temperatures and being extra careful not to come to rehearsals or performances if you have even the slightest hint of a sniffle, while always trying to maintain a positive attitude, is all part of daily life in COVID times. Safety plans and revisions of safety plans, revisions and more revisions, waiting, hoping, along with incredible 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 am 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 destroyed. The stage and orchestra pit were completely flooded; the Greenroom was also totally flooded, as well as causing 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, suffered minor water damage and can be saved.

Repairs have already begun and as heartbreaking as this damage is, it could have been much worse. In all likelihood, it will be anywhere from four to seven weeks before we can have full access to the theatre. I hope that we will be able to bring you one more concert from the Old Aud in late November to celebrate the completion of the restoration.

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.

I want to thank the administration and staff of the 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 sure that the student learning experiences and safety are of the highest possible quality during these difficult times. During 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!!

Support UBC Opera
The Cast*

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<td>Antonio</td>
<td>Hans Grunwald</td>
<td>Hanwen Liang</td>
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UBC Opera Ensemble Chorus:

**SOPRANOS:** Rachel Buttress, Hannah Ernst, Kathryn Rose Johnston, Deandra Miranda, Erika Simpson, Clara Wiens

**MEZZO-SOPRANOS:** Neusha Amir-Rahmani, Mara Ayque, Julia Coutant, Katie Fraser, Kathleen Isaza, Alyssa Samson

**TENORS:** Gabriel Chona Rueda, Ming-Xuan Chung, Zhilun (Alex) Liu

**BARITONES/BASSES:** Matthew Gorlitz, Hans Grunwald, Josh Levesque, Hanwen Liang, Denis Petrov

*All cast and chorus are subject to change

Synopsis

At the Hotel of the Golden Fleur-de-lys, the staff are frantically attempting to contend with a bevy of aristocratic guests from across the world, all of whom are preparing to journey to Reims for the coronation of the King Charles X of France. Maddalena, Antonio, and Don Prudenzio attempt to rouse the servants to do their best, but nothing much is accomplished until Madame Cortese, proprietress of the hotel and spa, arrives and urges everyone into action, giving strict instructions on what to say to each guest.

In tribute to his ancestors, King Charles has asked his guests to come in Medieval attire. A raging pandemic has threatened Europe so all of the guests, not wanting to miss this incredible event, have chosen to wear masks and veils to protect themselves.

First to arrive is the young Parisian Countess of Folleville, already in her Medieval splendour. She is eagerly awaiting her carriage full of fashionable clothes (to the dismay of her servant, Modestina). When her cousin, Don Luigino, arrives, he brings terrible news: her carriage has overturned and her clothes are ruined! Stricken, the Countess faints. The German Baron of Trombonok arrives on the scene, but is quickly pushed aside by the less-than-knowledgeable doctor, Don Prudenzio. The Countess comes to, and laments her fate. Suddenly, Modestina returns—bearing her Medieval-themed hat, the sole survivor of the crash! Consoled, the Countess sings of her fortune (to the amusement of all present).

The Baron prepares for the group’s departure that evening. More guests arrive, including Spanish Don Alvaro and Russian Count Libenskof, both of whom compete for the affections of the lovely Polish Marchesa Melibea. Tensions rise as the two men quarrel, to the astonishment of the ladies, and chaos reigns as the Baron and Don Profondo comment on the folly of love. Calm is restored by the appearance of the famed Roman poetess, Corinna, who sings of the harmony and peace the Holy Cross will bring to all.

Left alone, Madame Cortese worries about the delay in Zefirino’s return with the horses necessary for the evening’s travel. Lord Sidney arrives as she departs. He is hopelessly in love with Corinna, and has arranged for many flowers to be left for her. Shortly after he leaves, Corinna returns with her ward, Delia, and Don Profondo, who has received a letter informing them they should be ready to leave shortly.
As Corinna is admiring the flowers left by Lord Sidney, the suave Cavalier Belfiore enters, and swiftly begins to woo Corinna. Unfortunately for the Cavalier, Corinna is wise to his tricks, and gently rebukes him. However, the Cavalier quickly finds a new love interest in the beautiful Delia.

Don Profondo, a great lover of antiquities, arrives to catalogue everyone’s luggage. The Countess, herself in love with the amorous Cavalier, arrives and inquires as to his whereabouts. Zefirino finally returns, but with disastrous news. All the guests are summoned to hear of this dreadful occurrence – he has not been able to find horses, and so they have no means of travel! The entire cast sings in despair.

Suddenly, Madame Cortese rushes in announcing to everyone that a letter has arrived from Paris. She hands it to Don Profondo who reads it aloud, announcing that the King will be holding great festivities upon his return to Paris that promise to be even grander than the coronation in Reims. The travelers are thrilled, and the Countess offers everyone room and board at her Paris home. They all celebrate and prepare for a grand banquet and celebration at the Golden Fleur-de-lys.

In the meantime, the Baron tries to reconcile the jealous Count Libenskof with Marchesa Melibea, who has been seen with Don Alvaro. The Baron leaves, and the Count and the Marchesa engage in a rapturous duet with declarations of love for each other and resolve their tensions.

Antonio, Gelsomino and Maddalena await the arrival of the nobles. Upon their arrival, the Baron announces a program that promotes peace and harmony among all the nations of Europe. Each noble then performs a national song from their native country, and the celebration concludes with Corinna performing an improvised tribute to the newly crowned Charles X, King of France. Suddenly the Cavalier leads the nobles in a chorus of reverence to the new king as all proclaim: “Long Live France and its Valiant King!”

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.
David Agler, Conductor

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 Burritt.

Notable guest conducting engagements include productions with the Wexford Festival Opera, Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires), Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Netherlands Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Opera Theater of St. Louis, New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, l’Opéra de Montréal, Minnesota Opera, Manitoba Opera, and Opera Colorado.

As a symphonic conductor, he has led concerts with the San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Winnipeg Symphony, Warsaw Philharmonic, Edmonton Symphony, National Arts Centre (Ottawa) Orchestra, CBC Radio Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Symphony, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, and San Francisco Chamber Symphony.

As Music Director for Vancouver Opera, Mr. Agler earned particular acclaim for productions of repertoire from the twentieth century, including Peter Grimes, The Makropulos 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.

UBC Opera Ensemble

The University of British Columbia Opera Ensemble was founded by Canadian lyric coloratura, Nancy Hermiston, in 1995. Beginning with a core of seven performers, Ms. Hermiston has built the program to a 90-member company. The Ensemble performs three main productions at UBC every season, several Opera Tea Concerts, and a series of Singer Behind the Song events featuring international stars who work with Ensemble students. As well, the Ensemble has several engagements with local community partners such as the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Opera, and Bard on the Beach. In addition, the Ensemble travels each year to the Czech Republic to gain valuable European performance experience. Frequently they appear in concert with the Plzen Opera Orchestra, and they are regular guests at the Nürnberg Opera House for their Musikalischen Damen Teas (founded by Prof Hermiston in 1985). They have also given several concerts in Beijing, Shanghai, and Chengdu, China. The Ensemble has also toured throughout B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. The Ensemble’s mission is to provide an outstanding performance and academic education for young, gifted opera singers, preparing them for international careers. Past main-stage productions have included Le Nozze di Figaro, Die Zauberflöte, Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Suor Angelica, La Bohème, Dido and Aeneas, The Bartered Bride, Manon, Eugene Onegin, Florence: the Lady with the Lamp, Dreamhealer, Falstaff, Don Giovanni, Cendrillon, Albert Herring, the Western Canadian Premiere of Harry Somer’s Louis Riel, The Crucible, Die Lustige Witwe (The Merry Widow), Rusalka, Così fan tutte, Dialogues des Carmélites, Carmen, The Tales of Hoffmann, The Florentine Straw Hat, La Traviata, A Night in Venice (Eine Nacht in Venedig), A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Consul, Orfeo ed Euridice, La Cenerentola, Il Tabarro and Gianni Schicchi, and Silent Night and Pasażerka.
Tina Chang, Pianist

Pianist and Coach, Tina Chang, is currently on the music staff at Vancouver Opera, and at Wexford Festival Opera in Ireland. Based in Vancouver, she has been involved with Chor Leoni, re:Naissance Opera, Health Arts Society, and Queer Arts Festival. She is currently on faculty at the Vancouver Academy of Music, and is also on the coaching staff at the University of British Columbia.

Past engagements include: faculty coach and pianist at Hawaii Performing Arts Festival; coach at UBC Summer Vocal Workshop; staff pianist and coach at soundSCAPE New Music Festival in Cesena, Italy; music director with Fear No Opera in Victoria; coach and repetiteur at Mill City Summer Opera in Minneapolis; pianist and coach with the Atelier lyrique at the Opéra de Montréal; assistant coach at Glimmerglass Opera Festival; staff coach and sessional lecturer at Dalhousie University; pianist and coach at SongFest; and fellowships at Aspen Opera Theatre Center, Music Academy of the West, and the Vancouver International Song Institute (VISI).

Tina holds a Bachelor of Music degree from University of British Columbia and a Master of Music degree from University of Minnesota.

Richard Epp, Pianist

Richard Epp is a Vancouver based vocal coach, pianist and conductor. He is senior opera coach for the Opera Workshop at UBC and as well as teaching several classes in the School of Music. At UBC he has conducted Serse, Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe, Le nozze di Figaro, Die Zauberflöte, Hänsel und Gretel, Der Fledermaus, Die lustige Witwe, Brundibar, Cabaret, Weisse Rose and two world premieres among others. He worked at the Vancouver Opera as pianist for their Resident Artist Program for five years and has also been on the faculty at the Vancouver Academy of Music. He has appeared in concert for both Vancouver Early Music and Vancouver New Music and has premiered numerous Canadian works and has appeared in recital on CBC on numerous occasions.
Production Team

DIRECTOR
Nancy Hermiston

CONDUCTOR
David Agler

LIGHTING DESIGN
Jeremy Baxter

COSTUME DESIGN
Parvin Mirhady

OPERA COACHES
Richard Epp
Tina Chang
Michael Onwood
Derek Stanyer

PROPS
Matthew McLellan

WARDROBE
Catherine Thornley (Head)
Kathryn Johnston

PROGRAMME
Magdalena How
Leila Kirves

MARKETING COORDINATION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN
Miles Linklater

ASSISTANT STAGE AND EVENTS MANAGER
Jackson Allen

SURTITLES CREATOR
Magdalena How

SURTITLES OPERATORS
Magdalena How
Kari Rutherford

OPERA LIBRARIAN
Alyssa Samson

BOX OFFICE DIRECTOR
Trevor Mangion

STUDENT BOX OFFICE DIRECTOR
Katie Fraser

BOX OFFICE WORKER
Emma Jang

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR/CARPENTER
Grant Windsor

ASSISTANT CARPENTER
Philip Piper

STUDENT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Matthew McLellan

ASSISTANT TECHNICIANS
Neusha Amir Rahmani
Roshan Saulnier

ASSISTANT LIGHTING TECHNICIAN
Liam Robertson

HEAD STAGE
Don Robinson

HEAD LIGHTING
Mark Burge

ASSISTANT HEAD LIGHTING/Stage
Jason Conroy (Oct. 17)

HEAD AUDIO
Lloyd Balser (Oct. 16)
Eric St. Laurent (Oct. 17)
Brad Danyluk (Oct. 18)

ASSISTANT AUDIO
James Perrella & Eric St. Laurent (Oct. 16)
Eric St. Laurent (Oct. 18)

CASUAL STAGE
Michael Kerns
Gabriel Oakes

FILMED BY COLLIDE ENTERTAINMENT
Brandon Fletcher
Mike Southworth
Barry Ambrosio
Nick Taillefer
Adam PW Smith

LIVESTREAM SUPPORT
Proshow AV

Chan Centre Production Department

VIDEO DIRECTOR
Mike Southworth

PRODUCTION MANAGER
David Humphrey