Wednesday Noon Hours  
UBC SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts • livestream March 10, 2021, 12:00 pm

Melody Courage soprano  
Tina Chang piano

(continued from page 1)

“O legere Hirondelle” from Mireille  
Charles Gounod (1818–1893)  
Libretto by Michel Carré

Oh! quand je dors  
Franz Liszt (1811–1886)  
Text by Victor Hugo

Enfant, si j’étais roi  
Franz Liszt (1811–1886)  
Text by Victor Hugo

Stille Tränen  
from Zwölf Gedichte von Justinus Kerner, Op. 35  
Robert Schumann (1810–1856)  
Text by Justinus Kerner

Four Songs, Op. 43  
ii. Die Mainacht (“The May Night”)  
Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)  
Text by Ludwig Heinrich Christoph Hölty

“Songs my mother taught me”  
from Gypsy Songs, Op. 55  
Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)  
Text by Adolf Heyduk

Lullaby *  
Brian Current (b. 1982)  
Text by Marie Clements

(continued page 2)

Dodo, mon tout petit from the opera Louis Riel *  
by Harry Somers and Mavor Moore

“O wär’ ich schon mit dir vereint”  
from Fidelio  
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)  
Libretto by Joseph Ferdinand von Sonnleithner

Composed: Gounod (1864); Liszt (1842); Liszt (1842); Schumann (1840); Brahms (1868);  
Dvořák (1880); Current (2017); Cusson (2019); Beethoven (1803 1st version – 1814 final version)

* Lullaby — Used with permission of Brian Current and Marie Clements.

* The right to present “Dodo, mon tout petit” has been generously donated by the owners.

We acknowledge that the University of British Columbia is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.
Louis Riel: Replacing the “Kuyas”

In 1967, Mavor Moore and Harry Somers had been commissioned by the Canadian Opera Company to write an opera for Canada’s Centennial. They chose Louis Riel as a subject, and created a piece that has been consistently hailed as a work of international stature. In 2015, the Canadian Opera Company, eventually joined by the National Arts Centre and Opera Quebec, asked the estates of Mavor Moore and Harry Somers for rights to mount the opera in 2017 as part of Canada’s sesquicentennial celebration.

In the spring of 2017, as preparation for the new production was underway, music professor Dylan Robinson approached the Canadian Opera Company, to let them know that a piece of music in the opera, (popularly known as the “Kuyas”), was actually taken from a Nisga’a song, which Harry Somers had viewed in a recording done by Marius Barbeau early in the 20th century. Specifically, the song belongs to the House of Sgat’ii’n, is to be sung only by the head of the House, and marks, among other things, the spiritual and legal passing along of inheritance. Singing of the song by others, in other contexts, is an egregious breach, harmful to the singers, to the audience, to the House of Sgat’ii’n.

As a result, Professor Robinson organised a meeting, (hosted by and with support from the COC), with a broad spectrum of concerned parties. Led by representatives of the Nisga’a; G̱ooshi Ts’imsel Mike Dangeli, (Nisga’a, Leader of the Git Hayetsk Dancers); Waf’áaks Keane Ta’t (Nisga’a, Leader of the Kwhlii Gibaygum Nisga’a Dancers) and Sm Loodm ‘Nüüsm Dr. Miqué’l Dangeli (Tsimsian, Leader of the Git Hayetsk Dancers); and including other Indigenous individuals and groups, as well as the estates of Harry Somers and Mavor Moore. It was at that meeting that the full nature and importance of the music became clear to the estates, and it was immediately recognised that something had to be done.

There was no time to address this issue before the 2017 presentations of the opera, but in the subsequent months, Professor Robinson spearheaded contact with the Nisga’a Lisims government, and they made an official request to remove the song.

Demonstrating a passionate commitment to resolve the problem, the COC Artistic Director, Alexander Neef, offered the physical and financial resources of the COC, with support from the National Arts Centre, to commission replacement music. In 2019, Ian Cusson, the composer-in-residence at the COC, and himself Métis, was commissioned to create music to replace the “Kuyas”. At the same time, in looking through past documents, it was discovered that Moore’s original words for that section of the opera had not, in fact, been used. According to Moore, Somers was having trouble setting them, time was getting tight, and Somers asked if they could use the “Kuyas”, a piece he had set independently, prior to the opera, and plug it in. The replacement, then, (now known as “Dodo, mon tout petit”), can be seen at least partially as returning to the creators’ original intent.

The Estates of Harry Somers and Mavor Moore wish to profoundly thank everyone that contributed to this process, but in particular Dylan Robinson for bringing the information to light, and Alexander Neef and Ian Cusson, for their extraordinary support. As an example of how to navigate the complex landscape of addressing similar issues, it’s hoped that others will learn and benefit from this experience. “Dodo” was birthed out of an urgent desire to make things right, while honouring the original creators’ intent, and we believe it has succeeded magnificently.

Sincerely,
The estates of Harry Somers and Mavor Moore

BIOGRAPHIES

Melody Courage soprano

Métis soprano Melody Courage gained national attention as The Native Girl “…played with ethereal grace…” in the 2017 world premiere of Marie Clements’ and Brian Current’s opera Missing, co-produced by City Opera Vancouver and Pacific Opera Victoria. Missing gives voice, in English and Gitxsan, to the story of Canada’s missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Vancouver-based Melody, of Dene, Cree and Chipewyan descent, is much in demand by composers, and was honoured to appear with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in the World Premiere of composer Ian Cusson’s aria ‘Dodo, mon tout petit’, a co-commission by the Canadian Opera Company and the National Arts Centre to replace the ‘Kuyas’ aria in the opera Louis Riel by Harry Somers and Mavor Moore.

Melody starred in Two Odysseys: Pimooteewin/Gállábártnit presented by Soundstreams Canada and Signal Theatre, directed by Michael Greyeyes and Cole Alvis, composed by Melissa Hui/ Britta Byström. These two operas, sung in Cree and Sàmi, are rooted in traditional tales from Canada and Nordic countries.

Tina Chang piano

Pianist and Coach, Tina Chang, is currently on the music staff at Vancouver Opera, and most recently at Wexford Festival Opera in Ireland. Based in Vancouver, she has been involved with various musical organizations in town, including 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). She has toured with Vancouver Opera in Schools (VOIS), and various members of the musical community to bring classical music to communities throughout British Columbia.

Tina holds a Bachelor of Music degree from University of British Columbia and a Master of Music degree from University of Minnesota.
UPCOMING EVENTS
Join us for our online concert streams at music.ubc.ca/streaming!

Sun Mar 21
UBC Opera — Concert of Operatic Excerpts
2:00 pm and 7:00 pm, streaming from the Chan Centre
Tickets $10 Student | $20 General

Note: There is no Wednesday Noon Hour concert on March 17.

Wed Mar 24
Wednesday Noon Hours
Jose Franch-Ballester clarinet
Luke Kim cello
Jane Coop piano
Bruch Selections from Eight Pieces, Op. 83 for Clarinet, Cello and Piano
Chan Ka Nin Among Friends
Brahms Trio for Clarinet, Violincello and Piano in A minor, Op. 114
12:00 noon, streaming live from the Chan Centre

Sun Apr 11
UBC Opera — Opera Tea Online!
Enjoy a concert of opera arias and song favourites from the comfort of your own home.
2:00 pm, streaming from the Chan Centre
Tickets $10 Student | $20 General

For further details and a complete list of events, please visit:
music.ubc.ca/calendar or call 604.822.5574.

Want a weekly list of events delivered to your inbox every Monday? Sign up for our weekly Hot Sheet by sending an email to music.concerts@ubc.ca.

PRODUCTION CREW

UBC School of Music
Concert Assistants
Gabriella Pastor
Nina Weber
Daniel Tong
Production Assistant
Leah Bruno
Communications Production Assistant
Hannah Rubia
Recording Engineer
David Simpson
Piano Technician
Scott Harker
Marketing & Communications Assistant
Tze Liew
Digital Communications Coordinator
Dina MacDougall

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts
Production Manager
David Humphrey
Video Director
Mike Southworth
Head Audio Recording Technician
James Perrella
Assistant Head Audio Technicians
Ken McDonald
Brad Danyluk
Assistant Head Lighting Technician
Jason Conroy
Assistant Head Stage Technician
Don Robinson

Filmed by Collide Entertainment
Video Director
Brandon Fletcher
Camera Operator (Collide Entertainment)
Barry Ambrosio
Camera Operator (UBC School of Music)
Jamie Mitri

The Front of House, Ticketing and Production staff of the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts are members of CUPE 2950.

Presented by the UBC School of Music and the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts