

Report of the President  
Vancouver Recital Society  
Annual General Meeting

The Vancouver Recital Society's 37<sup>th</sup> Season was filled with exciting new discoveries, familiar faces, and spectacular events. We remain steadfast in our commitment to presenting both established and emerging artists to Lower Mainland audiences, and to developing the next generation of audiences, through our Classics for Kids and Ru35 initiatives.

For its 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of support, we are grateful to **Odlum Brown, Limited**, our Season Sponsor.

The Edwina and Paul Heller Next Generation Series, the cornerstone upon which the VRS has been built, provided 4 Canadian debuts (Ksenija Sidorova, István Vardai, Anna Fedorova, and Harriet Krijgh), an instrument debut (the accordion, in the arms of Ksenija Sidorova), and the return of mandolinist Avi Avital with the Dover String Quartet, who also made their VRS debut, and Benjamin Beilman, who performed with Yekwon Sunwoo. Incidentally, Yekwon went on to win the 15<sup>th</sup> Van Cliburn International Piano Competition last summer and opened our Classic Afternoons Series at the Chan Centre in our current season.

For their support of the Edwina and Paul Heller Next Generation Series, we are most grateful to the **Estate of Edwina and Paul Heller, RBC Foundation** and the **City of Vancouver**. We are also indebted to our individual concert sponsors on that series - **Joyce & Tony, Lynn Kagan, Richard & Lynda Spratley**, an **Anonymous Concert Sponsor** (you know who you are) and the **VRS Board of Directors**.

Classic Afternoons at the Chan began in November, with the sold-out return of Uzbek pianist Behzod Abduraimov. The series continued in March with Paul Lewis, Murray Perahia in April and in May, Benjamin Grosvenor closed the season with another sold-out, stirring performance.

As always, we enjoy our wonderful relationship with the **Chan Centre** and are grateful to the wonderful staff and the **Chan Endowment Fund at the University of British Columbia** for their support of our Classic Afternoons Series. Individual Concert Sponsors are integral to our ability to present and our sponsors for concerts on the 2016-17 Classic Afternoons Series included **Elaine Adair, Jean Hodgins** and the **John C. Kerr Family Foundation**.

Peak Performances at the Playhouse began with the return of the 'Great Danes', the Danish String Quartet in November. In March, some quick thinking on the part of pianist Malcolm Martineau and Miah Persson turned what was meant to be the VRS's first duo-vocal recital, featuring Miah and baritone Florian Boesch, using surtitles, into an outstanding vocal recital by Ms. Persson, featuring wonderful context and colour provided by Mr. Martineau, with some surtitles. Oh, the joys of live presenting! In May, Spanish 'poet of the piano' Javier Perianes, made a long awaited return to our stage.

The **Peak Group of Companies** is the sponsor of Peak Performances and we are most appreciative of their support and that of **Judith & Poul Hansen** for their sponsorship of the Danish String Quartet.

In January, cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras and pianist Alexander Melnikov helped audiences avoid the mid-winter blues with Winterlude, a 3-concert series at the Annex and the Vancouver Playhouse. A heartfelt thanks to the **Martha Lou Henley Charitable Foundation** for its support of this mini-festival.

The VRS was thrilled to host the only Canadian date and the Vancouver debut of Joyce DiDonato in November 2016. Joyce's project, *'In War & Peace: Harmony Through Music'*, with Il Pomo d'Oro Chamber Orchestra was a thrill to experience and for many in the audience, it was the event of a lifetime. **Andrea Fessler** sponsored Joyce's appearance in Vancouver in memory of her mother, Agnes Fessler.

Miloš Karadaglić's Bach to Beatles tour was cancelled due to a wrist injury and while we were disappointed that he wasn't able to perform in Vancouver, we look forward to his return in a future season.

We are grateful to the **Province of British Columbia** for the funding we receive in the form of a Community Gaming Grant. We were thrilled this past season, with the addition of our new accommodation sponsor, the **Westin Bayshore**, which provided a wonderful home away from home for our visiting artists. Our media partners for the 2017-18 season included the **Vancouver Sun**, the Georgia Straight and **Lamar Transit Advertising**.

In addition to the concerts we present at the Playhouse, the Chan Centre and the Orpheum Theatre, we are immensely proud of the work we do in the community, with partners at the **Vancouver Academy of Music**, the **Saint James Music Academy** and with the **Vancouver School Board**, offering Classics for Kids Concerts to children enrolled in some of Vancouver's more economically-challenged areas. The **Diamond Foundation** and the **Lohn Foundation** have continued to be supportive of our efforts in this regard and we wish to extend our gratitude to them.

There is an important group of people, many of whom work quietly behind the scenes that the Board of Directors would like to acknowledge and thank. Our honorary auditor, **Collins Barrow**, has been providing our annual audit since the VRS's inception in 1980. Our fantastic and committed staff of five, headed by Founder and Artistic Director **Leila Getz**, General Manager **Sara Getz**, Marketing and Communications Manager, **Niamh Small**, Box Office Manager **Jonathan Evans** and **Alex Glyniani**, Artistic Administrator. Jonathan has since left the VRS to pursue a more production-focused role with our good friends at Early Music Vancouver, and we are thrilled to welcome **Brianne Colon** as the VRS's new Box Office Manager. Working alongside our staff is a dedicated group of volunteers to whom we are tremendously grateful.