



Report of the President  
Vancouver Recital Society  
Annual General Meeting

The Vancouver Recital Society's 38<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.

We are grateful to **Odlum Brown Limited**, our Season Sponsor, for 9 years of tremendous support.

The Edwina and Paul Heller Next Generation Series enjoyed 4 Canadian debuts (Zhang Zuo, Sheku & Isata Kanneh-Mason, Schaghajegh Nosrati, and Edgar Moreau), the return of acclaimed Irish mezzo-soprano Tara Erraught with South African pianist James Ballieu, and the wonderfully talented Verona Quartet, who opened our season, filling in for the scheduled Simón Bolívar String Quartet which was unable to appear as a result of political unrest in their native Venezuela.

For their support of this cornerstone series, upon which the VRS has been built, we are grateful to the **Estate of the late Edwina and Paul Heller**, **RBC Foundation**, and the **City of Vancouver**. We are also indebted to our individual concert sponsors: **Joyce & Tony**, **Ann Harding**, **Lynn Kagan**, **Robert & Denise**, and the **VRS Board of Directors**.

The first concert on our Classic Afternoons Series at the Chan Centre was in October and featured Yekwon Sunwoo, the Gold Medal winner from the 15<sup>th</sup> Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, followed later that month by the return of George Li, who first appeared on our stage in 2011 at the age of 16. In March, Marc-André Hamelin returned to a warm welcome after a 6-year absence from our stage and was followed, in April, by a riveting performance by Inon Barnatan.

As always, we wish to acknowledge and thank The Chan Centre and its staff, with whom we have developed a deeply rewarding relationship over the years. The **Chan Endowment Fund at the University of British Columbia**, too, has been a great support to our Classic Afternoons Series. We are most grateful to the **John C. Kerr Family Foundation** for its sponsorship of George Li's performance on that series.

Peak Performances at the Playhouse has hit its stride and saw a dramatic increase in subscribership, thanks in part to the fact that we moved all of the performances to Sunday afternoons. The series opened with a spellbinding performance by cellist Alban Gerhardt and pianist Steven Osborne. The camaraderie between these two fantastic musicians was felt in every corner of the hall, and when Alban sat down next to Steven at the piano, it felt as though every member of the audience was sitting right there next to them on that one bench. The impact a full house, an educated and enthusiastic audience, and terrific musicianship can have on a concert-going experience is

immense. Thanks so much to Richard & Lynda Spratley for their sponsorship of that concert.

In February, violinist and conductor Nikolaj Znaider returned to the VRS for the first time since 2008, with pianist Robert Kulek. Nikolaj's career has focused more on his conducting of late, so to secure this date with him performing on his violin was a real coup for us. In April, the Benedetti Elschenbroich Grynyuk Trio made its Canadian debut.

We wish to express gratitude to the **Peak Group of Companies** for its sponsorship of the Peak Performances Series.

Pop Out Performances this past season included two performances by acclaimed pianist Paul Lewis, whose journey into the works of Haydn, Brahms, and Beethoven continues in the 2018-2019 Season, culminating on March 3, 2019 with a program that includes Beethoven's Diabelli Variations, Op. 120. Thank you to **Elaine Adair** for sponsoring Paul's regular appearances in Vancouver.

This past April, Sir András Schiff returned to our stage to perform a profoundly illuminating program of Bach, Schumann, Beethoven, Brahms, and Mozart. It proved to be one of the highlights of the season. We are most grateful to the **Martha Lou Henley Charitable Foundation** for sponsoring this performance.

As has (unfortunately) been the case in each of the last two seasons, we had to contend with an artist cancellation. Pianist Yuja Wang, who was scheduled to appear at the Chan Centre on Friday, May 4, had to cancel due to illness. Ticket buyers were understandably upset, but we hope to make it up to them when she returns to Vancouver.

We are grateful to the **Province of British Columbia** for the funding we receive in the form of a Community Gaming Grant. The **Westin Bayshore** provides a wonderful 'home away from home' for our visiting artists. Our media partners for the 2017-18 season included the **Vancouver Sun** and the **Georgia Straight**.

In addition to the concerts we present at the Vancouver Playhouse and the Chan Centre, we are proud of the work we do in the community with our partners at the **Vancouver Academy of Music**, the **School of Music at the University of British Columbia**, and the **Vancouver School Board**, offering master classes and Classics for Kids concerts. 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 (now Baker Tilly WM LLP)**, 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 **Brianne Colon** and Artistic Administrator **Alex Glyniani**. Brianne has moved on to an academic career and we wish her well. Alongside our staff is a dedicated group of volunteers to whom we are tremendously grateful.

I also wish to name some of the other people who are critical to our success each season: our designer extraordinaire **Lydia Avsec** of **Copilot Design**, **José Verstappen**, who painstakingly lays out each of our concert programs, our musicologist **Donald Gíslason**, whose notes inform and entertain, and **Ewa Borkowska** of **Valiant Accounting**, who has been helping us watch our bottom line for more than 20 years. Thank you!

Last, but certainly not least, we are indebted to our audiences and donors without whom we simply wouldn't be.

