



VANCOUVER  
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SOCIETY

**VIVA VRS!**

**SPRING CONCERTS 2022**

**Golda Schultz** soprano  
**Jonathan Ware** piano  
Tuesday June 14 2022

# From the Artistic Director

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Dear Friends:

Finally! Golda Schultz is making her debut for us at the Vancouver Playhouse and we are absolutely delighted after such a long wait. Golda was originally scheduled to perform for us earlier this season, but we bowed out when she was offered the role of the Countess in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *The Marriage of Figaro* in January. It was a career-making moment for a young soprano whose star has since gone into orbit.

Interestingly, Golda's recital partner, pianist Jonathan Ware, is *not* making his VRS debut, although it will be his first time at the Playhouse. Almost exactly one year ago, Jonathan and soprano Ema Nikolovska recorded a recital in the Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin especially for VRS patrons, and they were featured in one of our 'Beyond the Concert Hall' interviews, which can be found on our YouTube channel. It will be great to finally meet him in person!

The program Golda and Jonathan are performing for us, entitled *This Be Her Verse*, was recently recorded and released on the Alpha Classics label. It features songs by female composers, from Clara Schumann, Rebecca Clarke, Nadia Boulanger and others through to the present time, with songs by South African composer Kathleen Tagg.

We are most grateful for the support of our Season Sponsor, the Peak Group of Companies, and "*Baie dankie*" to Hilde and Peter Colenbrander for sponsoring this concert. Translated from Afrikaans it means "thank you very much!"

I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous support of our Next Generation Series Sponsor, the Estate of Edwina and Paul Heller, as well as RBC Foundation, the City of Vancouver, and our accommodation partner, the Westin Bayshore hotel.

This is the last performance of our 2021-22 Season, which, in spite of its stop-and-start nature, has been one of our very best yet! Thank you to all who have supported us during these times in so many different ways. Because of your generosity and interest, we shall return in September with a "wow" lineup of performers. Tickets go on sale tomorrow at 10am.

Have a wonderful summer.



Leila



## CELLPHONES

The use of cellphones and recording devices is prohibited in the concert hall. Please take this opportunity to turn off all electronic devices.

音乐厅内禁止使用手机，禁止拍照，录音，录像。请观众关闭所有电子器材，感谢您的合作。

# Program

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**Golda Schultz**, soprano  
**Jonathan Ware**, piano

Tuesday, June 14, 2022 7:30 pm  
Vancouver Playhouse

Season Sponsor



Series Sponsor

**The Estate of Edwina and Paul Heller**

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Additional Support



CLARA SCHUMANN (1819-1896)

**Liebst du um Schönheit  
Warum willst du andre fragen  
Am Strande**

[approx. 7 minutes]

EMILIE MAYER (1812-1883)

**Wenn der Abendstern die Rosen  
Du bist wie eine Blume**

[approx. 6 minutes]

REBECCA CLARKE (1886-1979)

**Down by the Salley Gardens  
The Tiger  
Cradle Song  
The Seal Man**

[approx. 15 minutes]

CLARA SCHUMANN (1819-1896)

**Lorelei**

[approx. 3 minutes]

EMILIE MAYER (1812-1883)

**Erlkönig II**

[approx. 5 minutes]

INTERMISSION

NADIA BOULANGER (1887-1979)

**La mer est plus belle  
Prière  
Élégie  
Cantique**

[approx. 12 minutes]

KATHLEEN TAGG (b. 1977)

**This Be Her Verse**  
(new commission with text by Lila Palmer)

After Philip Larkin

Wedding

Single Bed

[approx. 15 minutes]

# Golda Schultz soprano

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**Early Life & Education:** Born in South Africa, Golda Schultz received her education at New York's Juilliard School and Bayerische Staatsoper's Opernstudio.

**Performances:** Recent concert highlights include a remarkable week with the Los Angeles Philharmonic during which she joined Esa-Pekka Salonen for Sibelius' *Luonnotar*, Gustavo Dudamel for Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, and Zubin Mehta for Mahler's Symphony No. 2. Golda also performed Haydn's *Die Jahreszeiten* with the Cleveland Orchestra and Franz Welser-Möst in Cleveland and at New York's Carnegie Hall, and debuted with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin as the soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem*.



Photo credit: Dario Acosta

**This Season:** In the 2021-2022 season Golda adds two new roles to her repertoire: Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*, which she sings at the Metropolitan Opera under Susanna Mälkki, and Adina in *L'elisir d'amore* which marks her debut at Opéra national de Bordeaux under Nil Venditti. Further appearances include reprising Agathe at Bayerische Staatsoper and Contessa Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at The Met.

**Recordings:** Golda is an exclusive recording artist for *Outhere Music* France. Her debut album, 'This Be Her Verse', on which she performed alongside collaborative pianist Jonathan Ware, was released in April 2022 on Alpha Classics. The programme explores the worlds and inspirations of female composers from the Romantic era to the present day, and includes a commission by Kathleen Tagg and Lila Palmer.

Golda Schultz is represented by HarrisonParrott, London, UK.

# Program Notes

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## Clara Schumann

### **Liebst du um Schönheit | Warum willst du andre frage | Am Strande | Lorelei**

Clara Schumann (née Wieck) was a major figure in nineteenth-century music. As a child prodigy, she toured Europe with her father and teacher Friedrich Wieck, meeting Goethe in Weimar and Paganini in Paris. After her marriage to Robert Schumann in 1840 she balanced her role as super-mom to the eight children she bore with that of an internationally celebrated pianist—while still finding time to compose a considerable number of works for piano and chamber ensemble as well as more than two dozen songs.

Her love marriage to Robert Schumann was the central sustaining element in her emotional life before his death in 1856. Almost all of her songs were composed as Christmas or birthday gifts for her husband, who along with Schubert was a major influence on her compositional style. Like her husband, she wrote accompaniments that included preludes, interludes and postludes to the vocal line, making the piano into a musical commentator with an interest in the poetic text equal to that of the singer.

Their mutual sympathy in compositional style is no better demonstrated than in the joint publication of the song collection featuring their lieder entitled *Zwölf Gedichte aus F. Rückerts Liebesfrühling* with dual opus numbers (her Op. 12 and his Op. 37), published in 1841. *Love's Spring* by the German poet Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866) was a collection of love poems written during his courtship of Luise Wiethaus, whom he married in 1821. The attraction the newly-married Schumanns must have felt for this collection of poems is obvious.

\* \* \*

*Liebst du um Schönheit* is the second song in the Schumanns' joint publication. It poses the question of what is worth looking for when looking for love. Is it mere beauty, or youthfulness, or material wealth? No, the poet replies, love is its own reward. The pedal drone and gently rocking figures in the accompaniment are reminiscent of Chopin's *Berceuse* but here they stand emblematic of the constancy that characterizes real true love.

The eleventh song in the collection, *Warum willst du andre fragen* asks how true love can be found and identified. And the answer is always the same: it's in the eyes where the look of love is always unmistakable. The 'four-squareness' of Clara Schumann's setting, with its uniform four-bar phrases, is offset by a harmonic inventiveness that maintains the listener's interest from stanza to stanza.

*Am Strande* (1843), with a text by Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759–1796) translated by Wilhelm Gerhard (1780–1858), reminds us that Clara Schumann was a piano virtuoso of the first rank. Her piano accompaniment to this lied churns up the keyboard in imitation of the churning sea that separates the lovers of the poem's text.

*Lorelei* by poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) tells the tale of a siren-like maiden haunting the banks of the Rhine River who tempts distracted river voyagers to their deaths with her bewitching murmurs. Clara Schumann is reported to have possessed an autographed copy of Schubert's famous lied *Erkönig*, which evidently provided the model for the drumbeat of repeated notes, expressing the anxiety of the scene, in the piano accompaniment of this song.

## Emilie Mayer

### **Wenn der Abendstern die Rosen | Du bist wie eine Blume | Erkönig II**

The *New Grove* describes Emilie Mayer as “the most prolific German woman composer of the Romantic period” and it is easy to see why. Drawn to the larger compositional forms—which in that period only men were considered capable of mastering—her output includes numerous orchestral works (eight symphonies and four overtures), an opera, dozens of instrumental sonatas, eight string quartets, and numerous solo piano works, as well as nearly 130 songs for solo voice or vocal quartet.

Her talent and skill were honed in studies with some of the leading figures in German music, including song composer Carl Loewe (1796–1869), with whom she studied composition, and theorist Adolf Bernhard Marx (1795–1866), with whom she studied counterpoint and fugue. Her works were widely performed in Europe during her lifetime but suffered eclipse after her death and are only now being re-discovered.

\* \* \*

*Wenn der Abendstern die Rosen* is a setting of a poem by Helmina von Chézy (1783–1856), the librettist of Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Euryanthe* (1823) and playwright of *Rosamonde* (1823) for which Schubert wrote incidental music. In this poem the female speaker is enticed into passionate thoughts of love at nightfall. The highly decorated vocal line and oom-pah-pah rhythm of the piano accompaniment evokes the style of an opera aria by Bellini.

The *bel canto* singing style is even more evident in Mayer's setting of Heinrich Heine's *Du bist wie eine Blume*, a poem gushing with tender sentiments of love and longing, communicated by the many sigh motives in the vocal line and the occasional outburst of virtuosic display. The piano accompaniment is more than a discreet witness to the singer's emotions, and pulses with the excitement of a heartbeat at the word *Herz* (heart) in the text. Mayer's expressive use of harmony in this lied is exceptionally refined.

Goethe's spooky folk ballad *Der Erlkönig* describes the theft by an alluring nature spirit of the soul of a young boy as he rides through the forest in the arms of his father on horseback. This poem has been set more than 130 times but Emilie Mayer appears to be the only composer to set it twice. Her second setting, composed 30 years after her first, eschews the classic depiction of galloping horse's hooves to concentrate on the wind whistling through the trees, melodramatically portrayed by creeping minor scales in the bass and anxious tremolo trill figures in the mid-range. Her varied depiction of the four voices in the poem (narrator, boy, father and spirit) is utterly masterful.

## Rebecca Clarke

### Down by the Salley Gardens | The Tiger | Cradle Song | The Seal Man

Rebecca Clarke was a pioneering British composer and professional violist who spent much of her creative life in the United States. She was one of the first female students of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) at the Royal College of Music in London and one of the first female professional orchestral players. Best known for chamber works such as her much-recorded Viola Sonata (1919) and Piano Trio (1921), she also composed 52 songs in a variety of styles throughout her life.

\* \* \*

William Butler Yeats' poem *Down by the Salley Gardens* is the lament of an impetuous young man in love with a young woman who bids him to "take love easy." But he, "being young and foolish," persists in his ardour and pays the price in emotional pain. The simplicity and folksong-like character of the text is reflected in the sparseness of accompaniment and modal harmonies of Rebecca Clarke's 1919 setting of this poem.

William Blake's famous poem *Tiger, Tiger* stares fascinated in horror at the destructive power residing deep in the unconscious of every living thing that moves, as symbolized by the tiger. Remarkable in Rebecca Clarke's dark expressionist setting of 1927–1931 is how completely divorced the piano 'accompaniment' is from the singer's questioning persona. The piano *is* the tiger, ranging menacingly up and down the keyboard, seeming ready to pounce at any moment. Particularly chilling are the piano-tiger's final growls in the closing bars.

Her treatment of Blake's *Cradle Song* from 1929 is very different. Here the texture is quite simple and transparent, dominated by streams of parallel chords in the piano accompaniment, evocative of both the innocence of childhood and a child's drowsy drifting into sleep.

*The Seal Man* is drawn from English poet John Masefield's re-telling of the Celtic myth of the seal creature that takes on human form to lure women to their deaths in the sea. Rebecca Clarke's setting is vividly dramatic with numerous atmospheric touches such as the 'wet' figurations in the piano that open and end the song, framing the action as a 'sea story' from start to finish. The vocal line is raw and dramatic, often declaimed without any piano accompaniment at all, but in the end it is the haunting overtones of the piano



that devour the listener's attention, just as the sea swallows up the poor young girl in this eerie tale about the dangers of love.

## **Nadia Boulanger**

### **La mer est plus belle | Prière | Élégie | Cantique**

French composer, pianist and conductor Nadia Boulanger studied composition with Gabriel Fauré at the Paris Conservatoire but she is best known as a music educator. Her students have included some of the leading composers, arrangers and performers of the 20th century, including Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Philip Glass, Burt Bacharach, Quincy Jones, Dinu Lipatti and Astor Piazzola, to name but a few.

She composed works for orchestra and for chamber ensembles, as well as over 30 songs. Her compositional style is similar to that of Debussy in many ways. Like Debussy, she uses whole-tone or modally-tinged scales and ambiguous but vividly colouristic harmonies in sequences of parallel chords, stabilized by long pedal tones in the bass.

*La mer est plus belle* by symbolist poet Paul Verlaine (1844–1896) pays tribute to the immense power of the sea, a quality conveyed in the massively sonorous waves of piano sonority Nadia Boulanger sends sweeping over the keyboard, much in the manner of Chopin's 'Ocean' Étude, Op. 25 No. 12.

Henry Bataille (1872–1922) was a very successful French playwright whose plays explored how the instinctive passions of his characters bumped up against the social norms of polite society. His poem *Prière* is an open-hearted enquiry into the meaning and significance of a personage such as the Virgin Mary. The opening melody's small range, its recurring leaps of a 5th and the way the melody circles hypnotically around that leapt-to note all recall medieval religious chant, as do the drone tones at the bottom of the piano accompaniment. Passion of an almost operatic intensity erupts in the central section, however, as more vivid tonal colours and thicker textures are applied to support the singer's expanding emotional awareness.

Albert Samain (1858–1900) was a French symbolist poet much inspired—if that is the right word—by the morbid mentality and dissolute life habits of his fellow poet Charles Baudelaire. Nadia Boulanger's rather pretty dressing-up of Samain's darkly nostalgic poem *Élégie* (the exact meaning of which is anyone's guess) strikes the listener as typically French in its emphasis on tone colour and what classical parodist Anna Russell called French "wispiness". Who else could set the phrase *Un paradis s'est écroulé* (a paradise has come crashing down) so blithely and innocently?

*Cantique* is a poem that appeared in the second act of the play *Soeur Béatrice* (1901) by Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949), the author of the play *Pelléas et Mélisande* which Debussy adapted to create his opera of the same in 1902. The protagonist in this text is a nun meditating on the disappointments of love. Nadia Boulanger's exquisitely tender melody line and discreet accompaniment of sympathetic chordal harmonies in the piano are utterly ravishing.

Donald G. Gíslason 2022

# A note on the Text of 'This Be Her Verse'

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When Golda first approached me to ask for a song cycle which centered female experience, I felt overwhelmed by the sheer volume of experience absent from the song repertoire. How could I possibly hope to correct women's erasure from the song tradition in programming and historiography with what could only be a drop in the bucket? And so I began with the personal: stories told by Golda and Kathleen about their experiences and those of the women they knew, and mined my own notebooks for observations and memories gauche, raw and reflective, stretching back from my early twenties to the present. Out of a refining of these experiences came the collection of texts in *This Be Her Verse*. The title of the cycle reflects and pays homage to the Yorkshire poet Ted Hughes (from my home county), whose poem *This Be The Verse* my mother hung on our fridge at home. She hung it with a certain wry acceptance of the realities of family life which belied her tenderness and infinite patience that now, as a young mother, I remember with awe. The poems in the set are in some sense modular. They can be sung and understood chronologically over time, in order of composition and in order that one individual might experience the events described in a life, beginning with 'Single Bed' and ending with 'After Philip Larkin', or musically, following the journey mapped by the composer.

Women still shoulder a great deal of the burden of both 'the mental load' and the physical load of domestic life. Mothers return to work in the U.S. with open wounds in their bodies, and often in their spirits. Maternal mortality is rising again across the world (in areas where it was ever prioritized). Women who seek to define their lives professionally rather than personally still face judgment and censure, as do mothers who do prioritize their health and families over 'bouncing back'. Femicide is still endemic across the world. And yet, these horrors are largely not what we talk about when we talk about our experiences, or when we talk to each other. We use humour, warmth and sometimes rage as we talk about the visceral, frightening, frustrating, rich, giddy experience of being female, the embodied physicality of all we experience as transformations in our lives, and how we protect each other, by what we share and what we hide.

*This Be Her Verse* would not exist without the great song cycle *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Robert Schumann's setting of Adelbert von Chamisso's *Woman's Love and Life*. Taking on that hyper-romanticized behemoth reflecting the cookie cutter wife and mother of the German nineteenth century was a significant inspiration for me as it has been for other female creative teams. The poems in *This Be Her Verse* follow a similar trajectory to those in *Frauenliebe*: from single young woman to wife and mother. The crucial difference is in exploring how this takes place against an internal and external contemporary conversation about 'marrying' expectations of gender and one's own desires for family against the massive roadblocks to personal and professional fulfillment these choices can throw up.

In his setting, Schumann cut the crucial final poem of Chamisso's text, in which the grandmother of *Frauenliebe* addresses her granddaughter, balancing the violent emotion of a young woman entirely focussed on her husband with resilience tempered by time. The original cycle dedicated to Clara Schumann might have done well to have included that sense of perspective earned by survival. After Robert's demise Clara did what so many women have had to do: gather themselves and go out to earn a living, patch their hearts til they have time to tend them, raise and care for their children, somehow, against the odds, in a world that is structured to underpay and under-support them. *This Be Her Verse* is not a pantheon to female perfection, but a mirror to everyday women's hopes and fears, a mirror to our survival, and a salute to the choices women have made to self realise across time, from the celibate Abbesses commanding villages in the early medieval period, gloriously entombed alone marble celebration; to the mothers alone at home by choice or necessity. It is a celebration of brokenness and beauty. This song cycle has already been termed 'brutal' by one critic. Brutal as life often is for women, as brutally (let's be frank) as we judge ourselves and often each other, we go on, loving, serving, working, laughing. In Sharon Krebs' complete translation of *Frauenliebe*, the grandmother gives perhaps the most realistic blessing of the entire cycle: 'If your heart must break / May your courage remain steadfast'. May we have the courage to be honest, and be heard.



# Composer's note

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This cycle came about as an intensely personal collaboration between the artists who commissioned these songs, (Golda Schultz and Jonathan Ware) and the creators (Lila Palmer and myself). When Golda and Jonathan first approached me and Lila to write these songs, the idea was that it would be to tell our stories – not those of ‘women’s stories’ as told from the outside with the woman victimized or placed on a pedestal – but our stories in our own voices. We began the process by sharing stories deeply personal and mundane, and from there the works were written. Out of the process of collaboration came the decision for these songs to be performed as a flexible cycle, where the performers have freedom to choose the order of the songs based on what resonates with the performers – a choice which may be different from my original intent, but which excites me with its possibilities.

Musically, the texts always shape the vocal line. The piano part alternates between being its own protagonist, commenting on the text, supporting the text, and expanding dramatically on ideas voiced in the text. Given the highly personal nature of this process, the music was specifically written with the sound of these incredible artists in my ear.

The writing for the piano continues an exploration of a personal sound world in which I have been working for the past 15 years, creating orchestral textures with the piano through the use of extended techniques and extremely lightweight preparations using everyday household objects such as scarves and paper. My compositional work has largely been shaped by my work and collaborations as a performing pianist, music director and producer, particularly as a pianist and as a collaborator performing with singers from diverse backgrounds and genres. Storytelling, ideas of connection and sound exploration are what drives my work, and this work provided me with a place to bring together disparate parts of my professional life. I am extremely grateful to these rare artists who not only bring their sublime artistry to their vision of programming what they want to hear in the world, but for then going the extra steps and actively changing the landscape by commissioning both words and music from women artists about our own stories and experiences from our own points of view.

After Philip Larkin:

The piano introduces the sweeping strums of daily life washing over the vocal line on top of a dull, stopped thud of the bass. Predictability and slight deadening countering the sweep of motion, possibility and joy. The main interlude bridges the stanzas, sweeping out of the “ego self” and pushing forward in intensity, leading to a polytonal rude hammering, and a push-and-pull syncopated tug of war, all the way through to a tender intimacy – and back up to a battle of emotions. The final piano postlude starts brash and torn, winding down bit by bit as pieces of the old self – and resistance – crumble and peel off.

Single Bed:

This is the heart of this group of songs, built around highly personal and intimate storytelling. The music turns on a dime to support the ever-shifting turns of thought of the story teller, with recitative-like declamations becoming reflective or confessional like a theatrical monologue.

Wedding:

Wedding provides a musical snapshot of a pivotal moment. Musically, the setting juxtaposes an off-kilter tango with chaotically clanging church bells in the heat of the square. A single recurring E heartbeat occurs throughout: heart beats tying together the ideas of excited uncertainty, waiting, and the passage of time.

Kathleen Tagg, 2022

# Song Texts for 'This Be Her Verse'

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## After Philip Larkin

Woman's no island (would she were)!  
Her life, the deep'ning coastal shelf:  
Ambition's shore swept by demand;  
Her time against His ego self.

Escape, resist, build up the wall-  
Still body, Tribe, Bond, Love! Seeps through...  
You'll be up nights, to hold them all,  
And hate and love the trespass too.

## Single Bed

Single bed - I state- Proclaim!  
My solitary intent  
Single bed: my estate,  
the regal bier of Queens

And Holy Women.  
I am not afraid. I am not  
Afraid of dinner parties,  
Smooth refills and wives  
Too frightened to get ugly  
Or fat. I will be fat and ugly  
If I choose. But I do not.

I claim my bed,  
my solitary chamber  
with its clean sheets.  
Listen! I am not afraid  
Of babies, endless talk  
Of teething, training,  
Cracked nipples, biting  
(not the pleasant kind).  
I am not afraid  
Of puckered intimacy,  
The gathered folds of life,  
Pulled together by some Escaping thread.  
I am not afraid of love  
aged down to top-shoulder level.

I am just afraid  
Of waking to Prince Cha-  
'Prince Almost...Close Enough.'  
No that's not worst,  
Worst, the lemon mouth  
And bird sharp eyes of  
Woman Who Finds Fault.

Oh let me be soft edge-smudged  
Tenderized by toil,  
Let my eyes water pink  
With nights awake locked tight,  
To keep all fear at bay;

And coiling blue beneath skin  
Now smooth with little service  
Let work and living intertwined  
Map and etch our life so deep  
That compass lost, the track remains.  
And so for fear of Her  
Much more than He  
Unless He comes,  
Here will I be.

## Wedding

No confetti crowd.  
Just a bride and her witness,  
Blinding sun, cement  
Baking the just completed act,  
Into sticky reality.  
The bride, shifting in her dress.

Waiting, waiting for the groom.  
The men tumble outside.  
The bride seethes  
Royal displeasure.

She laid a hand on my arm.  
'Dearest, you should know...  
You will always be waiting  
Waiting for him  
to catch up.

# Thank You!

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COVID-19 has changed a great many things about the way in which we move through the world and interact with one another. Over the last couple of years, our supporters have sustained us in ways that we couldn't have imagined, and never have we been more grateful.

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This list was created on Tuesday, June 7, 2022 and includes bequests, gifts of cash, donations of securities, sponsorships and ticket donations dating back to January 1, 2021. Should you discover any errors or omissions, please accept our sincere apologies and contact Melodie Corbett, Fundraising & Special Projects Manager by email to [melodie@vanrecital.com](mailto:melodie@vanrecital.com) or by phone at 604.602.0363, so that any necessary corrections can be made.

There are many ways to support the VRS including making a philanthropic gift, sponsoring a concert and/or including us in your estate plans. If you would like more information, please contact us at 604.602.0363.

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