

President's Report

The 2022-2023 Season was spectacular. We continued to make up some of the concerts lost to the pandemic, and programmed artists we've been watching and chasing for years. There were Vancouver and Canadian debuts, and we welcomed diverse audiences who were attracted to some of the more out of the box concerts.

The season began in September with Italian pianist, Filippo Gorini, who gave a concert and lecture on Bach's The Art of Fugue. October was chocka block with make-up recitals and celebrations. Steven Isserlis and Connie Shih gave a fantastic recital at the Playhouse, followed by two performances featuring Sir András Schiff. The first featured Sir András at the Playhouse in a program we were not advised of in advance – he decided its content as he walked onto the stage and he shared his insights with the audience ahead of each piece. Two days later, he was finally able to perform the Goldberg Variations, which was originally scheduled as part of our 40th Anniversary Season, but was cut as a result of the pandemic. It was well worth the wait!

Following Sir András's performances, Turkish cellist Jamal Aliyev made his Canadian debut in recital with pianist, Fazil Say. The Playhouse was packed to the rafters for this concert and we were thrilled to welcome so many members of Vancouver's Turkish community. The first half of the season concluded in November with a recital featuring the up-and-coming violinist Randall Goosby with Zhu Wang at the piano.

The 2023 side of the season bounced from high to high, beginning in January with cellist Zlatomir Fung in his VRS debut with pianist Benjamin Hochman. Following their recital, in February we welcomed pianist Mao Fujita, whose Vancouver performance was his Canadian debut.

Spring sprung with the Jupiter Ensemble, featuring Thomas Dunford (who was no stranger to VRS audiences) and mezzo-soprano Lea Desandre. I don't think there was a dry eye at the Chan when their recital concluded and everybody who was there, leapt to their feet, bringing them back for several encores.

April was another busy month, with six concerts in four weeks! The Chiaroscuro Quartet made their return to our series, having last appeared in 2019. After an absence of 25 years, Midori returned to the VRS to perform a solo recital to a sold-out house. Two days later, the Danish Quartet returned with the penultimate performance of their Doppelgänger series, the last concert of which, is to be performed in the 2023-2024 season. The VRS has been a proud co-commissioner on this project of theirs. Three days after the Danes left Vancouver, we welcomed George Hinchliffe's Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain to the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. It was a first for the VRS to present in what many refer to as Vancouver's 'Big House' and it was a fun and different kind of performance for us. The audience

travelled from far and wide to join us for the evening and it was an enormous success.

Hot on the heels of the Ukes (as we have affectionately taken to calling them) pianist Tom Borrow made his Canadian debut at the Playhouse and the following week we presented another Italian pianist in Andrea Lucchesini. As I mentioned previously, April was a VERY busy, and musically rewarding month!

The final two concerts took place in the first week of May. The ENTIRE Kanneh-Mason Family came to Vancouver to perform in one of only two Canadian dates. Their performance featured all seven of the children; Isata, Braimah, Sheku, Konya, Jeneba, Aminata and Mariatu. Their parents, Stuart and Kadiatu, joined them for the trip which really was a wonderful family event. There were many families in the audience and the Kanneh-Mason's did not disappoint.

The season ended with a breathtaking Vancouver debut by Benjamin Appl with pianist James Baillieu. The audience was rapt and the season concluded on a high note, which is indeed a feat considering baritones don't hit high notes!

Throughout our 43-year history, the Vancouver Recital Society has enjoyed an incredibly loyal family of sponsors, donors and supporters, to whom we are ever-grateful. This season was generously supported by: The Peak Group of Companies, our Season Sponsor; the Estate of Edwina and Paul Heller; the Martha Lou Henley Charitable Foundation; RBC Foundation; the Alan and Gwendoline Pyatt Foundation; the Deux Mille Foundation; London Drugs; Elaine Adair; Ric & Lynda Spratley; Alexandra Volkoff; Stephen Schachter & Nancy Stern; Elizabeth Arnold-Bailey & Robert Bailey; Joyce & Tony; Lynn Kagan; the VRS Board of Directors; George Pick & Santi Pick-Pelaez; Mamie Angus & Sherry Killam; the John C. Kerr Family Foundation; Ann Harding; and Allison Hart. I would like to, on behalf of the Board and staff, express our heartfelt appreciation for what you make possible.

We are also appreciative of the support we receive from the City of Vancouver and the Province of British Columbia through Theatre Rental Grants, Community Gaming, and the Festivals, Fairs and Events Recovery Fund.

Each season, there are more than a few people who beaver away behind the scenes to make everything you see and hear under the VRS umbrella possible. They include (in no particular order):

- o Lydia Avsec of Copilot Design who makes our brochure and our ads stand out from the rest;
- o José Verstappen, who typesets our programs and puts up with endless edits and last minute changes;
- o Donald Gíslason, our resident musicologist whose program notes have found a following all their own, beyond VRS concert-goers;



- o Scott Harker, our piano tuner extraordinaire, who keeps our Steinway sounding amazing;
- o Ewa Borkowska of Valiant Accounting, who has worked with us for more than 30 years to keep our books in order;
- o Our auditors at Baker Tilly WM LLP ;
- o Our small but incredibly dedicated staff which in the 2022-2023 season, consisted of Founder & Artistic Director, Leila Getz; General Manager, Sara Getz; Marketing and Communications Manager, Niamh Small; Box Office Manager, Alex Glynianyi; and Fundraising and Special Projects Manager, Melodie Corbett until December, when she returned to school to further her studies – but still contracts with us (nobody escapes the VRS that easily), and Arlo Spring, who joined us in March to pick up where Melodie left off.

I have had the privilege of chairing the VRS's Board of Directors for the past two years and my term both as chair and as a director will come to its conclusion with this year's AGM. During my time with the organization, I have seen many changes; we've moved our offices twice and weathered the storm of the pandemic. The board has done some fantastic work on governance and process and I believe it is in great shape as the organization looks ahead to its 45th season and beyond. I am grateful to my co-directors over the past year, Casey Ching, Valerie Hunter, Gloria Tom, Jonathan Girard, Jeff Dresselhuis, Jared Dawson and Shiuman Ho, who was appointed in September (and stands for election at this year's AGM) to replace Jessica Yan Macintosh. I have enjoyed our meetings and working with you, socializing with you, and learning from you.

And finally, I have not forgotten about our extended VRS family – our patrons and donors. Without you, the VRS simply would not be. I look forward to seeing all of you in the concert hall throughout the rest of this season and for seasons to come!

