

## President's Report

The VRS's 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season (2024-2025) was nothing short of remarkable. From rising stars to household names, we saw (and heard) everything!

It was an early start to the season, with BC-born soprano & pianist **Rachel Fenlon** accompanying herself (!) in a unique and stirring *Winterreise* at the Playhouse. From Rachel's performance we dove into a busy fall season with recitals featuring pianists **Schaghajegh Nosrati** and **Tamara Stefanovich**, guitarist **Raphaël Feuillâtre** and Canadian soprano **Barbara Hannigan** with pianist **Bertrand Chamayou**. The first half of the season also celebrated the music of Brahms in a two-concert mini-festival, featuring eight musicians from three countries – the **Castalian String Quartet**, violist **Timothy Ridout**, cellist **Zlatomir Fung** and pianists **Angela Cheng** and **Benjamin Hochman**. The final concert of 2024 featured the **Israeli Chamber Project** with soprano **Hila Baggio** performing *Two Clowns. Pierrot Meets Petrushka*, a program celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> birth year of Arnold Schoenberg with a semi-staged presentation of *Pierrot Lunaire* alongside Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Ravel's *La Valse*.

And if we thought the fall was busy, the spring side of the season was positively teeming with a diverse roster of musicians. In January, we welcomed Montenegrin marvel, **Miloš**, back to the VRS in a solo guitar recital at the Playhouse. From mid-February right through the middle of April there were near-weekly concerts: pianist **Tom Borrow** returned to the Playhouse, followed by the all-female brass ensemble **tenThing**, helmed by trumpeter **Tine Thing Helseth**, a sold-out Vancouver debut (at the Orpheum Theatre, no less) by Korean pianist **Yunchan Lim**, an incredible afternoon with Swedish/Norwegian violinist **Johan Dalene** in his Canadian debut with pianist **Sahun (Sam) Hong**, the return of VRS favourite, pianist **Steven Osborne**, and the exquisite partnership of cellist **Jean-Guihen Queyras** & and pianist **Alexander Melnikov**.

The season ended with two sold-out performances by classical music superstars, pianist **Evgeny Kissin** at the Chan Centre and cellist **Yo-Yo Ma** at the Orpheum Theatre. What a way to close our 45<sup>th</sup> season!

In addition to the wonderful performances at the Playhouse, the Chan Centre and the Orpheum Theatre in the season, we were thrilled to take pianist **Steven Osborne** to perform for the residents of Crofton Manor retirement community. This outreach is near and dear to our hearts, as many of our former subscribers are now residents and it is always a treat to be able to see them again. We are grateful to **Alistair Mackay** for his hard work in putting together this wonderful series for his fellow residents.

Throughout our history, the VRS has enjoyed a deeply devoted family of sponsors donors and supporters, to and for whom we are sincerely grateful. The season was generously supported by **The Peak Group of Companies**, our Season Sponsor,



while support for Next Generation Artists was received from the **Estate of Edwina & Paul Heller** and the **RBC Foundation**. Additional Support for outreach and online initiatives was generously provided by the **Alan and Gwendoline Pyatt Foundation** and the **Diamond Foundation**.

Our concert sponsors for the season included: **Elaine Adair, Ian & Cathy, Elizabeth Arnold-Bailey & Robert Bailey, Rick Carswell & Maxine Searle, Joyce & Tony, Colleen & Nick Filler, Stephen Fitterman, the Forster/Stephenson Legacy Fund, Arlene Gladstone & the late Hamish Cameron, Laurie & Tony, Ann Harding, the John C. Kerr Family Foundation, Lynn Kagan, Judi Korbin, Risa & Bill Levine, London Drugs, the Martha Lou Henley Charitable Foundation, George Pick & Santi Pick-Pelaez, the Quesnel Foundation, Dr. Barbara Romanowski, Joanne & Stanis Smith, Ric & Lynda Spratley, Alexandra Volkoff, Birgitt Westergaard & Norman Gladstone** and the **Board of Directors of the Vancouver Recital Society**.

On behalf of the VRS's Board of directors and staff, I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for all that 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, and the Festivals, Fairs and Events Recovery Fund.

Each season, there is a significant number of people who work behind the scenes to ensure that everything you see and hear from and around our stages happens (or at least appears to happen) seamlessly. In no particular order we wish to thank:

- **Lydia Avsec** of **Copilot Design** - Lydia's designs have been making our e-brochures, print and online ads pop for more than a decade;
- **José Verstappen**, who typesets our programs and puts up with endless edits and last-minute changes;
- **Donald Gíslason**, our resident musicologist whose program notes have found a following all their own beyond VRS concert-goers, and whose pre-concert talks inform and entertain;
- **Scott Harker**, our piano technician extraordinaire, who keeps our Steinway sounding amazing;
- **Gillian Hunter-Gibbs**, whose enthusiasm and commitment to music education ensures each of our Music for Munchkins and Classics for Kids school concerts are exciting events for all those who attend;
- **Ewa Borkowska** of Valiant Accounting, who has worked with us for more than 35 years to keep our books in order;
- **Hamilton Lau**, our wonderful page-turner;
- **Heather Turnbull** and her team at Vancouver Civic Theatres, whose smiles and skill make our experiences in the theatre much easier;
- **David Humphrey** and the Chan Centre Team for their knowledge and support;



- **Alasdair Tait** and our wonderful colleagues (and friends) at YCAT, who provide us with online content through their noon-hour concert series from Wigmore Hall, and willingly share their wisdom, advice and support;
- **Melodie Corbett**, whose eagle eye helps proof our programs and whose editing talents stitch together our online video content;
- Our small but incredibly dedicated staff which in the 2024-2025 season consisted of Founder & Artistic Director, **Leila Getz**; Executive Director, **Sara Getz**; Marketing and Communications Manager, **Niamh Small**; Box Office Manager, **Alex Glynianyi**; and Development & Outreach Coordinator, **D'Arcy Blunston**, who joined us in May, just as the season was concluding.

I am grateful to my fellow board members: **Jeff Dresselhuis, Jared Dawson, Gloria Tom, Cat Grant, Shiuman Ho, Jim Smith, Denis Walz** and **Jonathan Girard** for all their time, enthusiasm and support throughout the season. I think I can safely speak for myself, for the staff and for the broader community of VRS supporters when I say thank you for all you do for music in Vancouver. And I want to acknowledge **Valerie Hunter**, who has been in the audience since the early aughts and on the board since 2021. Valerie stepped off the board toward the end of the season but her contributions will be felt for years to come.

And finally, to our extended VRS family – our patrons and donors. Without you, the VRS could not possibly be the same. I look forward to seeing and greeting you in the concert hall throughout the rest of this season and for many more to come!



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Casey Ching  
President