VANCOUVER OPERA guild

Notes

David Steiner, Editor Autumn 2026

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello everyone!

I am honoured to step into the role of President here at the Vancouver Opera Guild. This Guild has a proud history of supporting a love for opera in this city and I am excited to be working with the team to continue this legacy.

On a personal note, I wanted to extend a special thanks to Nancy Wu and Bernadette Cheung for holding down the fort for the last year and for providing me with guidance as I transition into this role.

Thank you for this opportunity and I hope to meet many of you soon, either at the opera or at one of our Guild events.

Anna Batts
President, Vancouver Opera Guild

In Memoriam

Mary Olson

In preparing this tribute to Mary Olson, I asked several members for their thoughts: Her legacy lives on today. She played a significant role in the development of the Vancouver Opera Guild. She was instrumental in the Guild attaining Not-for-Profit status in 1978. I discovered that she and Ann Rabas were the Co-Chairs of the Tours Committee and led tours to New York and San Francisco. They led the very first Guild tour to England in 1985. "Mary was a gracious host who hosted soirees and post-opera parties. She always had a place for the Guild in her heart."

She became the Registrar at the Vancouver Academy of Music, and facilitated the Guild's hosting of the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions (now known as the Laffont Metropolitan Opera Auditions) there for many years.

She holds a special place in our memories and while we are saddened to learn of her passing, the Guild continues to benefit from the work she did in the past. There is a huge legacy of contributions by our Guild members.

I was sent photos by the Vancouver Academy of Music. I'm sorry to say that I've been thwarted in my efforts to include one here. If anyone has a photo of Mary to share, please let me know.

David Steiner

In Celebration



The Vancouver Opera Guild sends all good wishes to our generous member, Jane McLennan, on her recent 97th birthday. Happy Birthday Jane!

Committee Reports

Awards

Hello fellow Vancouver Opera Guild members. I, Donna Hogge, am the new Awards Chair. I spent the previous year as 'Co-chair' with Alex Volkoff, who was a terrific mentor for me, as she had a previous year's experience and much information to pass on to me. I worked with her on some of the logistics and final preparations for the Career Development Grant competition and jury deliberations. It was a very interesting process, and I believe it had a great result with the unanimous selection of the winner, mezzo-soprano Camila Montefusco.

This year the plan is to run the competition for candidates from the production side of opera, which I am sure will be an equally interesting process.

I volunteered for this position because I believed it suited my background as well as my love of opera and choral music. I spent 10 years as a member of the Board of Directors of the Vancouver Chamber Choir and was involved with the executive and with fund raising. I also became very aware of the challenges faced by the choral music community in Vancouver and elsewhere. In my working life as an academic physician scientist I was involved with training young scientists as well as reviewing grants and scholarship applications. I see the Vancouver Opera Guild awards program as its most important function, since fostering the careers of young people hoping for a career that includes opera is critical to the future of this art form. Funding for the arts is always in short supply, so the support of the VOG is most important.

Over the last few weeks Anna Batts, Bernadette Cheung and I have been involved with arranging funding for UBC opera students going to the Laffont Competition, which will begin later this year and in early 2027. Three students who will be going to the competition have been identified and will receive some funding from the VOG. I am sure you join with me in wishing them success at this competition.
I look forward to working with other VOG members during my term as Awards Chair.

Donna Hogge, Chair
Awards Committee

Events

This year, our annual Holiday Luncheon will take place at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club in Point Grey on November 28th. A Save the Date will be sent out well ahead of the event with a formal invitation to follow. As always, the events committee would like donations for our Silent Auction Table. Items that are most sought after are gift certificates, so if you have a favourite restaurant, or store that you could approach for a gift certificate, that would be most appreciated. Also, good quality bottles of wine or any alcohol is always a good bet. Jewellery, fine China, and silver are also an added bonus. Please contact me or Regina Boxer with any ideas you might like to present that would help raise funds at our Silent Auction Table. We are always open to new suggestions. Perhaps a bit of Fall housecleaning will present some wonderful treasures waiting to find new homes.

Our last luncheon in April was a huge success, with an outstanding attendance, so we would like to have a repeat performance. Again, this year, we are planning a visit from Santa as well as some enchanting entertainment. Mark your calendars.

Lorna and Regina
Events Committee

Tours

What's better than springtime in Paris? How about springtime AND opera in Paris!!

We recently launched the details of our first tour of 2027 via email, with printed brochures to follow. This is a twelve-day operatic and musical journey through beautiful France, featuring the French Riviera, Paris, and Versailles, March 13th through March 24th. Highlight of this trip include four nights in Nice, three nights in Paris, and four nights in Versailles, with the following performances:

Unsuk Chin's *Alice in Wonderland* at the Opéra Nice Côte d'Azur
Concert by the Orchestre de Paris, featuring *Brahms and Walton*
Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* at the Opéra Bastille

Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* at the Royal Opera of Versailles
Rossi's *Oratorio pour la Semaine Sainte* at the Royal Chapel of the Palace of Versailles
Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* at the Royal Opera of Versailles

Bookings can be made through Great Expeditions, phone: 604-257-2040; Toll-free: 1-800-663-3364; by email: tours@greatexpeditions.com. For further information on our tours, please contact our new Tours Chair, Jill Plumbley, at 604-837-2629.

Jill Plumbley, Chair
Tours Committee