



# A Message from the Music Director



Looking back at the 2023/23 Season brings with it so many emotions and outstanding artistic highlights. The exquisite artistic programming stands out for me.

For example: Mozart: *Don Giovanni* Overture; Golijov: *Azul*, Cello Concerto with guest artist Alisa Weilerstein, guest accordionists and percussionists; Mahler's 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony. This concert had a huge impact on me, really a memorable concert. It showcased truly great orchestral playing, and clearly demonstrated how much we've grown as musicians of the VSO in the past few years. This program also included super exciting soloists in an unconventional concerto. Very much out of our comfort zone, but hugely successful and appreciated by the audience. The dramaturgical programmatic idea really came to life ("low – high, earth – heaven, underworld – world above").

Another concert that still resonates with me featured Adams: Short Ride and violin concerto, and Rimsky-Korsakov: Sheherazade. What I recall

here is that I was so pleased that we were able to live stream this amazing concert thereby enabling the VSO to reach so many more people, allowing them to enjoy an exciting start with *Short Ride*, the fantastic orchestra solos in Rimsky-Korsakov and the stunning Leila Josefowitcz in a very difficult concerto. What a combination: an amazing soloist, magnificently accompanied by the orchestra, and wonderfully captured by our digital team. Bravi to everyone.

We took a risk with our *Summer Nights* concert to end the 2022/23 Season. Bringing a semi-staged opera to life on the Orpheum stage was a challenge and an enormous pleasure. Attendance was fabulous and the audience enthusiastically showed their appreciation. A risk and a terrific success.

I feel that some of our greatest 2022/23 achievements included bringing very diverse and colourful programming to life with an orchestra that is clearly getting better and better every week. That we dared to take risks in our repertoire and guest artists to bring excitement and unexpected "once in a lifetime" memorable experiences to our audiences, donors, subscribers and community; that we have learned to deal with challenges beyond our control – we experienced some really challenging moments with unfortunate cancellations by top soloists, but the team worked very hard and really delivered, turning these difficult weeks around into successes, and showing our flexibility and capacity to react to changing realities of this new world in which we find ourselves.

Otto Tauek

Music Director, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra Artistic Advisor, VSO School of Music

# A Message from the VSS Board Chair



After a great, albeit it challenging, emergence from the global pandemic throughout the VSO's 2021/22 season, we experienced a 2022/23 VSO season where the orchestra and our audiences really came to life.

Whether from our classical repertoire, pops, kids or films, our innovative, inclusive and dynamic programming inspired members of our community like never before. One of my favorite moments of the season was the Golijov *Azul* Cello Concerto, at the end of which the audience rose and cheered as if the Canucks had just won the Stanley cup! There were many other concerts that gave us emotional chills because of this great orchestra and a highly enthusiastic VSO audience.

Three of the many other 2022/23 highlights for me included experiencing a rehearsal of *The Rite of Spring*. I love attending VSO rehearsals. These are amazing experiences. Also, Hilary Hahn performing the Sibelius Violin Concerto, and the always mesmerizing *Vivaldi's Four Seasons* at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts.

This successful 2022/23 season was made possible by the VSO's unwavering commitment to its purpose to create, curate and connect irresistible musical experiences. This purpose has guided us through tough times and, with the strong support of our donors, sponsors and government partners, allowed us to continue pushing forward and making the investment necessary even when uncertainty was at its maximum. Our VSO leadership team, fantastic Board of Directors, dedicated staff and volunteers have navigated us through the worst of times heading towards brighter days. I thank them all.

We are very proud and grateful to find ourselves at the end of the season in a position where we can continue to invest in our orchestra and positively impact our communities. Touring and recording, which we had to pause during the pandemic, are back at the top of our investment list. Stay tuned on those fronts.

On a personal note, as this report is disseminated, I will have concluded my term as Chair of the VSO. The 10 years I have served on the board of directors has been a total joy and one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. The evolution of the organization over this period, its reach and impact on our community, has been nothing short of amazing. Though the celebration of our 100th anniversary and subsequently navigating through Covid-19 have been two of the most notable highlights of those ten years, what I will cherish most is the human connections made and the inspiration I have experienced working alongside everyone connected to the VSO and VSO School of Music. Together we made sure that the Power of Music was able to benefit as many people as possible, thereby making our community one of the best and most inclusive places to live in the world.



**Étienne Bruson**VSS Board Chair
Vancouver Sympony Orchestra

# A Message from the President & CEO



Our 2022/23 theme was *Let's Play*, and play we did. The 104<sup>th</sup> VSO season was filled with exquisite artistry and spectacular internationally recognized guest artists, Canadian content, diversity and innovation. Throughout the pandemic the VSO had remained deeply committed to continuing to perform, and during the 2022/23 we remained equally committed to performing relentlessly throughout our recovery. It was a roller coaster ride but one which we navigated with grace and expertise.

We added bench strength to our operations team in order to build the foundation for pandemic recovery as well as pave the road to a robust future for the VSO. To that end, our Artistic Production team found an experienced leader in Bill Linwood who was recruited as *Vice President Artistic Planning*. Bill assembled a strong Artistic Production team to see us through our recovery and into a future including ongoing artistic excellence, as well as plans for recording and touring. We also created a new role – *Senior Director of Strategic Implementation* – to ensure

effective and efficient execution of key priorities. Natasha McEwen was successful in securing this position and, working alongside of the members of the VSO Senior Management Team, helped us successfully meet many of our strategic priorities outlined in our five-year strategic plan - *Cascade of Choice*. Operational integration between the VSO and VSO School of Music was central to our 2022/23 season to allow us to leverage the opportunities, expertise and strengths which our staff, musicians and faculty contribute so wonderfully.

Our Board of Directors, championed by Chair Étienne Bruson, dedicated an abundance of time and skill to ensure the VSO continued it positive trajectory. Together with our amazing staff, world-class musicians, generous donors and sponsors as well the support of all three levels of government the VSO's 2022/23 season was an unequivocal success. We weathered a storm together and continue to bring the power of music to our community. That's why we do what we do.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all.

**Angela Elster** 

President & CEO

Vancouver Sympony Orchestra & VSO School of Music





# Artistic Highlights

The VSO's 2022/23 concert season launched with the legendary violinist Itzhak Perlman, who joined Otto Tausk and the orchestra for an evening of some of Hollywood's greatest hits. Highlights of the concert included John Williams' spellbinding theme from *Schindler's List*, specially arranged for Perlman by John Williams. The evening began with John Estacio's energetic *The Harvesters* alongside a memorable reading of Brahms' Symphony No. 3.

The VSO's *Our Planet* was a season-long exploration of the intersection of music and the natural world – and the importance of preserving it. Like any art form, music can change our approach to an ever-evolving world, communicate insights on climate change, and help us to process the emotions surrounding it. Highlights of *Our Planet* included Canada's famed astronaut and environmentalist, Chris Hadfield; Stravinsky's classic *The Rite of Spring*; and a symphonic celebration of summer with Berlioz's *Les nuit d'èté*. Rounding out *Our Planet* was VSO Associate Principal Trumpet and celebrated composer Marcus Goddard's breathtaking *Antarctica: Life Emerging* – an unforgettable journey to the most remote part of the world.

In a year of discovery, Otto Tausk and the VSO introduced vital new works performed alongside classics of our repertoire. We heard memorable new works from such international composers as Unsuk Chin, John Adams and Kaija Saariaho, alongside brilliant works from Canadians Linda Catlin Smith, Rita Ueda, Dorothy Chang, Ana Sokolovic and Vivian Fung. In an unforgettable evening, cello superstar Alisa Weilerstein introduced Vancouver audiences to the music of Argentine composer Osvaldo Golijov, in a performance that risked taking the roof off of the Orpheum.

Throughout the season, the VSO welcomed brilliant international and Canadian soloists, including

audience favourites James Ehnes, Rihab Chaieb, Hilary Hahn, and the Jussen Brothers. VSO musicians came to center-stage with fabulous performances from Christie Reside, Nicholas Wright, Henry Shapard and David Lakirovich. The season also saw VSO's Vern Griffiths on the podium alongside another percussive superstar – Stewart Copeland. Classical Specials included performances from acclaimed Canadian pianist, Jan Lisiecki, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*, featuring the Vancouver Bach Choir.

The ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic still played a role in our programming, with some last-minute adjustments to programming. The VSO is grateful to such artists as Stewart Goodyear, Courtney Lewis and Alessio Bax, all of whom offered brilliant last-second performances, in place of indisposed artists. Our season-closing events seemed to put this behind us as we brought a fantastic young cast of artists together for Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* (Act IV) and an expansive orchestra for Respighi's *Pines of Rome*.

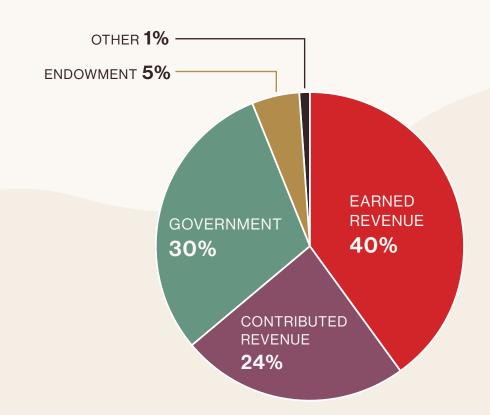
From Home Alone to Star Wars, the VSO continues to captivate audiences in a larger-than-life experience with Movie Nights at the VSO presented by TELUS. London Drugs VSO Pops also welcomed audiences with Sarah Slean's Joni Mitchell Tribute, Tony DeSare's brilliant take on Frank Sinatra, a tribute to Aretha Frankin, and many more! VSO's RBC Assistant Conductor, David Bui, took the lead on both our OriginO Kids Concerts Series, as well as Parc Retirement Living Tea & Trumpets. Always an audience favourite, Tea & Trumpets' host Christopher Gaze continued to regale audiences over a series of six concerts. Other highlights included the cheerfully ghastly Symphony of Terror and a one-night-only performance of Vancouver's own Juno ® Awardwinning band Said the Whale!

# Financial Report

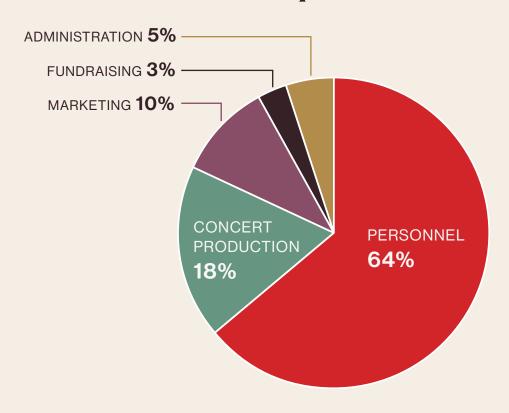
The 2022/23 season was the second of a projected minimum three-year pandemic recovery. Due to diligent budget management and generous support from our donors, sponsors, and government we were able to achieve a surplus for the year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The surplus added to the VSO's accumulated surplus and provides the VSO some stability as we enter the next few years of recovery, which will certainly continue to have a high level of uncertainty and many challenges. Total revenue and expenses increased 24% over the prior year as we gradually moved back to full season of concerts. Ticket revenue increased 66% over the prior year while concert expenses increase 27% as we welcomed back international artists. We will continue to build on the success of the 2022/23 season as we move forward into next season.



### Revenue



### **Expenses**





# Philanthropy at a Glance

We are grateful to our community of individuals, corporations, small businesses, foundations, and government that collectively provided the invaluable financial support to fully restore our diverse and innovative programming. Thanks to their investment, the VSO was able to provide exceptional music education and community engagement initiatives, and fulfill our mission to create, curate and connect irresistible musical experiences.

We also make special mention of the government of BC that provided a generous grant for arts recovery in our province. This led to a budget surplus in this reporting year, with a plan to support future seasons as we continue to build back audiences, manage expenses during rapidly rising inflation, and retain and attract the very best musicians and arts workers.

### **Individual Giving**

Over 3,500 individuals generously supported the VSO with an annual, monthly, or added donation at the time of their ticket purchase. Many were inspired to do so because of several matching gifts we received. We extend special thanks to the Gibson Gordon Family Foundation, the Bruendl Foundation and an anonymous donor who collectively contributed \$150,000 in matching funds.

### Corporate Giving

The VSO thanks our 21 renewing and new businesses who invested in the orchestra, sponsored series and single concerts, education programs and community outreach initiatives. Many of our corporate partners have been with us for decade, such as TELUS which has been supporting us continuously for 72 years!

### Vancouver Symphony Gala

Over 400 guests attended our first in-person Gala since 2020. Hosted by CBC's Margaret Gallagher and Lisa Christiansen, with auctioneer Fred Lee, the evening raised over \$740,000 to directly benefit the VSO and VSO School of Music. Guests enjoyed performances by the VSO and students from the VSO School of Music, and two Canadian icons were honoured with the Gold Baton Award – Measha Bruggergosman-Lee and Oscar

Peterson (accepted by his widow Kelly Peterson). We sincerely appreciate the organizing committee, attendees and the many sponsors, donors, auction contributors, bidders, and those that who raised their paddle to support music and music education in our province.

### Legacy Giving

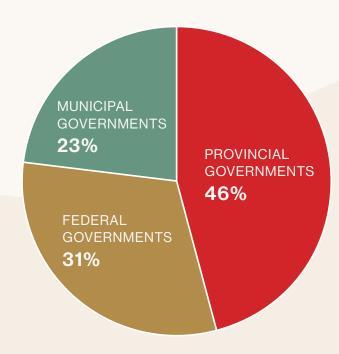
We welcomed 8 new members to the Stradivarius Legacy Circle, a program that thanks people in their lifetime for naming the Vancouver Symphony Foundation or Society in their will or estate plans. Five bequest gifts were received by the Society, and we thank these people for their foresight and generosity.

### **Endowment Funds & Foundations**

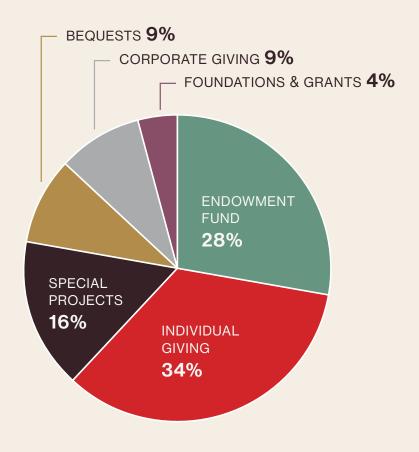
Gifts from charitable foundations and granting bodies were integral to our ability to restore a fulsome season with visiting international artists. Having a robust endowment fund and a stable source of income helps us plan for the future.

**Thank you** to each and every supporter for their vital role in the VSO's music-making, education and community engagement initiatives. Together we are keeping the music playing in traditional and new ways.

### **Public Sector**



### Private Sector





# VSO Education Highlights

VSO Education & Community Engagement provides programs tailored towards all ages and experience levels to increase access to music and music education and provide meaningful opportunities to engage with symphonic music.

### Elementary School Concerts

- Attended by over 10,000 elementary students from over 50 schools from across the Lower Mainland
- Study guides with strong curriculum links were provided

Music is a Theme Park used bold visual elements to illuminate the thrilling journey of the musical theme and other compositional elements. This exciting collaboration with SFU's Precursor Lab, an interdisciplinary creative team, used technology and artistry to engage the sensory imagination and cultivate mindfulness.

Philharmonia Fantastique: The Making of the Orchestra is a concerto for orchestra & animated film that flies through the instruments of the orchestra to explore the connection of creativity and technology. This composition was a collaboration between composer DJ Mason Bates, Oscar winning director and sound designer Gary Rydstrom, and animation director Jim Capobianco. The concerto was rounded out by a selection of new and classic works highlighting the orchestra's different sections. This sold-out concert was attended by 10,000 students in April 2023.

- "A magical day for all of my students, one that won't be soon forgotten!"
- "The concert was incredibly engaging and sparked an interest and excitement about music that the class didn't previously have!"
- "In a world of tech and pop music and TikTok it can be hard to inspire young people about instruments. My homeschooled daughter was inspired by your performance. Thank you so much!"

### OriginO Kids Concerts

An innovative array of programming delighted young audiences at our fun-filled 5-concert series on Sunday afternoons:

- Presto Mambo!
- Music is a Theme Park
- The Snowman (SOLD OUT)
- M is for Music
- Philharmonia Fantastique (Canadian Premiere)

### Symphonic Encounters

Symphonic Encounters is VSO's open rehearsal program, taking students, teachers, and community groups behind the scenes of a working rehearsal. In 2022/23, over 2,100 students from 40 different schools from across the Lower Mainland attended one of our six Symphonic Encounters events. A highlight of the program is an intimate meet and greet with VSO musicians that provides an opportunity for students to ask questions.

### Jean Coulthard Readings and Mentorship Program

Led by Maestro Otto Tausk and Mentor Composer Edward Top, this composition-reading program expanded into the new *Jean Coulthard Readings* and *Mentorship Program* that was debuted in 2022/23. Over an eight-month residency, emerging BC-based composers had the opportunity to learn from guest composers, Mentor Composer Edward Top, VSO musicians, and RBC Assistant Conductor Maestro David Bui. At the end of the program, the 6 composers had their new works read by the orchestra.

"I really enjoyed talking to Rita Ueda and coming to the concert after. Her insights were inspiring!"

### **VSO Connects**

VSO Connects Secondary offers music students the opportunity to work on their instrumental skills with VSO musicians over the course of several visits. VSO Connects Elementary offers young students an exciting initial exposure to the VSO and orchestral music.

In 2022/23 the VSO Connects program ran in six elementary schools and five secondary schools: The participating schools were: Old Yale Road Elementary in Surrey, Seaforth Elementary in Burnaby, Queen Elizabeth Elementary and MacCorkindale Elementary in Vancouver, Birchland Elementary in Coquitlam, McCloskey Elementary in Delta, Lord Byng Secondary in Vancouver, Cariboo Hill Secondary in Burnaby, Port Moody Secondary in Port Moody, LA Matheson Secondary in Surrey, and Sands Secondary in Delta.

With a total of 58 visits and four Connects Open Rehearsals, this program reached 1300 Elementary School and 410 Secondary School students.

"My favorite memory is dancing in the thunder and listening to the violin for the first time in my life! Thank you for coming to our school! I love your music!"

### Relaxed Performances

Relaxed Performances are aimed at increasing accessibility to symphonic music and are becoming a common practice in the performing arts. They benefit a wide range of the public, and particularly anyone who might be hesitant about the limitations on movement and sound that are found in a traditional concert setting.

The VSO's first ever Relaxed Performance took place on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, with RBC Assistant Conductor David Bui leading the orchestra in a performance of Scheherazade. This casual one-hour performance welcomed children and families, all neurodivergent community members, and those who simply wanted a more relaxed performance experience. Relaxed Performances limit audience size so that patrons are able to move around and find a quieter area.

A Venue Guide and Performance Guide were published in advance, helping audience members know what to expect, so they feel prepared.

Many of the 380 audience members who attended our March 16<sup>th</sup> concert were at their first symphonic concert and expressed gratitude for the opportunity.

"Hi Ava, Just wanted to say thank you. It is such a great opportunity as we would never have been able to enjoy a VSO performance otherwise. My kids really enjoyed the performance. Thanks."

### Giving Back

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and donors, VSO provided over 350 free or discounted tickets to schools and community groups to attend educational events and performances. The Giving Back program engages under-accessed community groups and schools in our educational and symphonic programming.



- Illustration by **Farhod** (Grade 3), William Cook Elementary, after attending **Philharmonia Fantastique** in April 2023

# The Path Forward

On June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, our community came together to honour Indigenous People's Day and experience the second annual *The Path Forward* at the Orpheum. This day-long celebration was curated by the VSO's Indigenous Council, with performances by the VSO in collaboration with the Coast Salish Peoples of the Musqueam; Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and other Indigenous special guest artists from across Turtle Island. Admission to the event was complimentary, making art and music accessible to all, and inviting our community to participate in Truth and Reconciliation.

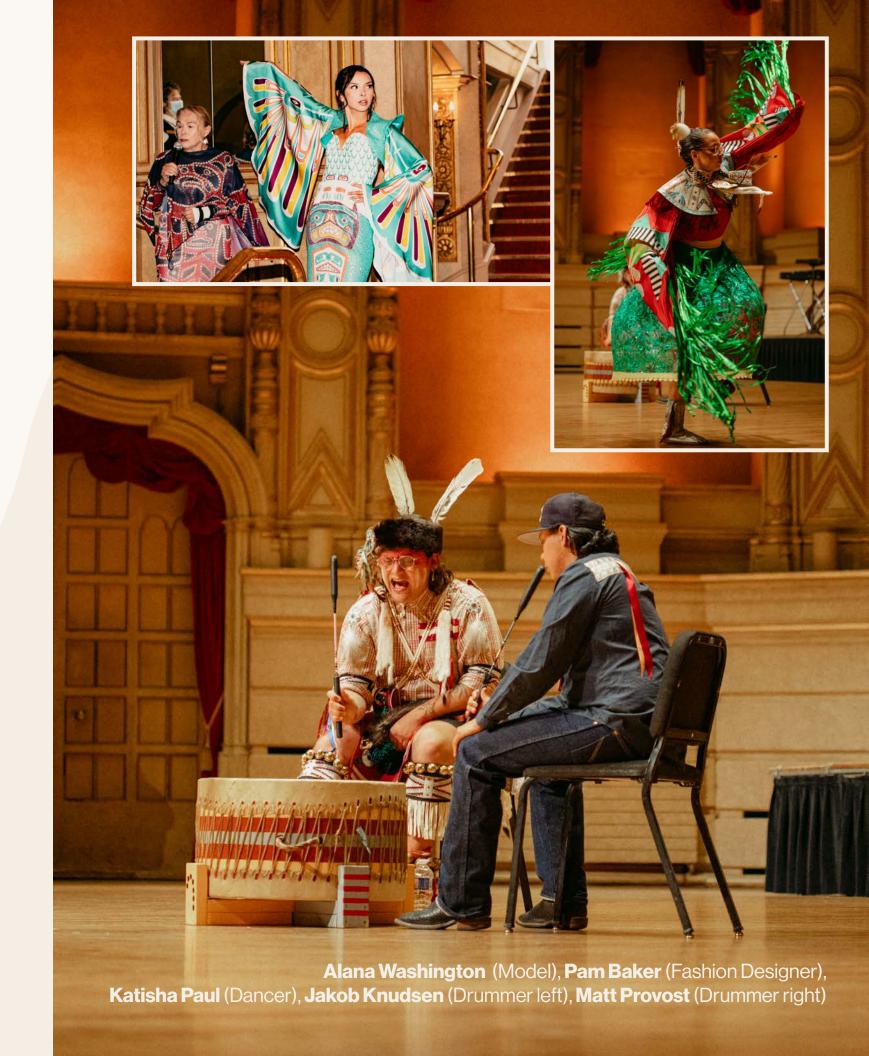
Before the concert, audience members shopped and supported local Indigenous vendors in the lobby and children had fun at the VSO & VSO School of Music's play zone. Later in the day a show-stopping fashion show took place on the Orpheum's grand staircase showcasing the artistry and innovation of Indigenous fashion designer Pam Baker.

Emceed by Geena Jackson, the mainstage concert featured performances by DJ O Show, Nova Charles, Rhonda Head and Bogdan Dulu, Numwayut = We Are All One, Mathews Red Trail Singers, and musicians of the VSO. Gifts of new orchestrations of the Musqueam Paddle Song and other Indigenous music were shared with an enthusiastic audience.

Highlights of *The Path Forward* were beautifully captured by Indigenous filmmaker Rayln Gladue and Indigenous photographer Georgie Lawson.

The VSO and VSO School of Music are grateful for this meaningful collaboration. The VSO's Indigenous Council is currently planning the third installment of the *The Path Forward* on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at the Orpheum with many exciting collaborations with Indigenous artists, the VSO and the VSO School of Music.





# Zhongxi Wu (Sheng), Nina Wang (Pipa)

# Day of Music 2023

Day of Music 2023, presented by BMO, was the VSO and VSO School of Music's flagship event in our commitment to accessible and affordable musical programming for British Columbians. Day of Music took place on June 10<sup>th</sup>, and featured 12 hours of free music, performed by over 100 musical groups across 13 stages, plus a variety of digital events broadcast at DayofMusic.ca. Concerts were held at various indoor and outdoor venues and BMO branches in Downtown Vancouver, South Granville, Yaletown, Coal Harbour, Burnaby, Richmond, Langley, and Victoria.

# Day of Music brought the power of music to over 25,000 people – all for free.

The VSO was front and centre, featured as Day of Music's pinnacle evening performance at the Orpheum. At various points throughout the day, the VSO shared the Orpheum stage with student ensembles from the VSO School of Music. Pyatt Hall

and classrooms at the School had packed houses all day for various VSO and School of Music soloists and ensembles, masterclasses, and Mini Music Maker workshops.

The vision of Day of Music is to bring communities and musicians from across British Columbia together to celebrate the joy, fun and healing nature of music making. Of the 100+ Day of Music performances, 25 of them featured VSO musicians, VSO School of Music Faculty and/or students.

The VSO and VSO School of Music extend sincere thanks to the Day of Music 2023 Presenting Sponsor BMO, and its other supporters and partners: the Province of British Columbia, Newmont North America, TELUS, the City of Vancouver, the Jane McLennan Fund for Free and Accessible Programming, Deloitte, Warrington PCI Management, Vancouver Convention Centre, Vancouver Civic Theatres, Yaletown BIA and YVR.



### Vancouver Symphony Orchestra\*

**Otto Tausk** 

**Music Director** 

Alan and Gwendoline Pyatt Podium

David Bui

RBC Assistant Conductor
Marsha and George Taylor Chair

**FIRST VIOLINS** 

Nicholas Wright Concertmaster

Ron and Ardelle Cliff Chair

Timothy Steeves §
Associate Concertmaster

William and Irene McEwen Chair

David Lakirovich

Acting Associate Concertmaster
Robert G. and Suzanne Brodie Chair

Jennie Press

Acting Assistant Concertmaster

Cassandra Bequary
Acting Second Assistant

Concertmaster

Jae-Won Bang

Sunny She

\_\_\_\_\_

Xue Feng Wei

Rebecca Whitling
Mrs. Cheng Koon Lee Chair

Yi Zhou

Georgina Leo A

Colleen Venables A

SECOND VIOLINS

Karen Gerbrecht Acting Principal

Jeanette Bernal-Singh Acting Associate Principal Jim and Edith Le Nobel Chair **Ashley Plaut** 

Acting Assistant Principal

Blythe Allers

Manuel Lok

**Daniel Norton** 

Ann Okagaito

Carina Vincenti §

Alicia Venables A

Jim Jingpu Xi ∆

**VIOLAS** 

Hung-Wei Huang

Principal

Andrew Brown
Associate Principal

Emilie Grimes
Assistant Principal

Katrina Chitty

**Matthew Davies** 

Michael and Estelle Jacobson Chair

Angela Schneider Professors Mr. and Mrs. Ngou

Kang Chair

Jacob van der Sloot

Peter Ing A

Isabelle Roland A

**CELLOS** 

Henry Shapard

Principal

Nezhat Khosrowshahi, OBC and Hassan Khosrowshahi, CM, OBC Chair

Janet Steinberg
Associate Principal

Zoltan Rozsnyai Assistant Principal

Natasha Boyko

Mary and Gordon Christopher Chair

Luke Kim

Dr. Malcolm Hayes and Lester Soo Chair

Charles Inkman

Cristian Márkos

Tim Wyman and Susan Gabe Chair

Albert Seo ∆

Vacant

Gerhard and Arian Bruendl Chair

**BASSES** 

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Evan Hulbert §

Associate Principal

Noah Reitman

Acting Associate Principal

David Brown

Acting Assistant Principal

Malcolm Armstrong

J. Warren Long

**FLUTES** 

Christie Reside Principal

Ron and Ardelle Cliff Chair

Rosanne Wieringa

Michael and Estelle Jacobson Chair

Dakota Martin ∆ Assistant Principal

**PICCOLO** 

Dakota Martin ∆

Hermann and Erika Stölting Chair

**OBOES** 

Joo Bin Yi Principal

Wayne and Leslie Ann Ingram Chair

Karin Walsh Paul Moritz Chair

Christine Kim ∆
Assistant Principal

**ENGLISH HORN** 

Vacant

Chair in Memory of John S. Hodge

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Principal

Robert G. and Suzanne Brodie Chair

Michelle Goddard

Assistant Principal

Taryn Brodie Chair

Aidan Wong Bass Clarinet

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Thalia Navas ∆

Sophie Dansereau
Assistant Principal/
Contrabassoon

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Holly Bryan ∆

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Andrew Poirier Acting Principal

Ethan Shrier ∆

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Principal

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PIANO

Grace Huang
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Bogdan Dulu Jemini Foundation Chair

ΔTemporary Contract § Leave of Absence

<sup>\*</sup> As of June 30, 2022

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