



Buzz Brass

Thursday | January 22 | 7:30 pm

THE Valley
Concert
Society

WORLD
CLASS
MUSIC

OUR 43RD
SEASON
2025-2026

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No unauthorized photography or electronic recordings are allowed during today's performance.*

BUZZ BRASS

Fanfare

Hugo Bégin (b. 1979), Canadian composer

My Spirit Be Joyful

*Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
Arr. Harry Herforth*

String Quartet No. 12 in F Major, B.179, Op. 96, “American”

IV. Vivace ma non troppo

*Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)
Arr. François Vallières*

Gymnopédies

III. Lent et douloureux

*Erik Satie (1866–1925)
Arr. Hugo Bégin*

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2

*Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
Arr. Sylvain Lapointe*

INTERMISSION

Brass Quintet in A-flat Major

II. Intermezzo

Axel Jørgensen (1881–1947)

Three Dance Impressions

*Morley Calvert (1928–1991)
Canadian composer*

The Girl with the Flaxen Hair

*Claude Debussy (1862–1918)
Arr. Christopher Smith*

Brass in Time

*Various composers
Arr. Enrico O. Dastous*

Sabre Dance

*Aram Khachaturian (1903–1978)
Arr. Enrico O. Dastous*

Artist Profile



Since its inception in the fall of 2002, the Montreal-based ensemble Buzz Brass has set out to showcase the full expressive richness of the brass quintet. This formation often remains little known or unfairly overlooked, as the public spontaneously associates brass instruments more readily with marching bands, military music, jazz, or pop ensembles rather than with the refinements of chamber music. To transcend these perceptions, the ensemble offers three distinct programs catering to a wide audience: general public concerts, youth-oriented performances, and symphonic collaborations. Thanks to its original artistic proposals blending rigour and entertainment, Buzz Brass never fails to impress.

With over 2,000 performances to its credit, the ensemble has captivated more than 500,000 music lovers across North America, Europe, and China. Its unique approach to brass chamber music is enriched by collaborations with guest artists on piano, organ, harp, and percussion, lending its performances

an energetic and joyful character that audiences particularly appreciate. The group expands its reach and influence through symphonic performances,



SYLVAIN LAPOINTE
founder / trumpet



BLAISE MARGAIL
trombone





FRÉDÉRIC GAGNON
principal trumpet



ANGÉLICA TOMBS
French horn



SYLVAIN ARSENEAU
bass trombone

collaborating with renowned orchestras such as those of Sherbrooke, Quebec City, Edmonton and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa.

The exceptional quality of Buzz Brass's performances is reflected in numerous awards and distinctions received over the years, including nominations at the ADISQ in 2024 and 2010, Prix OPUS awards in 2022, 2017, and 2014, the Prix Trille Or in 2015, and the Three Weeks Edinburgh Editors' Award in 2015. This critical acclaim is complemented by remarkable discographic success, with eight albums praised internationally, including the recent *Héritage* (ATMA, 2024).

Drawing on a unique repertoire that combines original brass compositions with bold transcriptions, Buzz Brass is now recognized as one of Canada's most prestigious brass quintets. The ensemble continues to enrich the musical landscape, demonstrating that brass instruments truly belong in the world of chamber music.



About the Valley Concert Society

Beginnings

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra was key to creating the society. They had been performing outreach concerts in Clearbrook with the help of some Abbotsford residents taking care of local arrangements. The symphony suggested that this group form a local society that would present programs offered by the symphony for a fixed fee.

On July 12, 1983, a group gathered in the home of Paul Moritz and elected an organizing committee with Paul as its president. On August 31, 1983, the BC Government issued the Certificate of Incorporation that made The Valley Concert Society a reality.

An intense campaign of mailing and phoning as well as advertising and fund-raising followed, all of it intent on procuring an audience and sufficient funding for their opening season. They achieved their goals with little time to spare, and the season opened with a chamber group from the VSO playing the program you will hear today. The rest of the first season consisted of two performances by the full symphony and a concert featuring the VSO's concertmaster Gerald Jarvis on violin and pianist Linda Lee Thomas.

A similar season was planned for the next year, but the society was not able to sell sufficient subscriptions, and the season was cancelled. They did receive a grant for \$500 and were able to present one concert featuring the Vancouver Cantata Singers.

A period of grappling with various organizational and promotional ideas resulted in a new beginning with a new format. Instead of relying exclusively on the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, the society presented a variety of small-group performers. The Purcell String Quartet opened the season on November 1; they were followed by programs featuring the Vancouver Chamber Choir, pianist Robert Silverman, and the quintet A Touch of Brass. The VSO did perform once to close the season.

Forty Years of Outstanding Music

The Valley Concert Society has brought over 200 remarkable musical experiences to the residents of Abbotsford. The most frequent performer has been the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, which performed sixteen times in the first nineteen seasons. The Victoria Symphony and the North Shore Sinfonia also played three times each. Smaller chamber orchestras made frequent appearances including such outstanding groups as I Musici de Montreal, Tafelmusik, and the Pacific Baroque Orchestra.



Choral groups were often booked. They came from near—the Vancouver Chamber Choir, the Vancouver Cantata Singers, and Chor Leone—and from far—the Soweto Choir of South Africa, the Cuban National Choir, and the Little Eagles of Siberia. Smaller vocal ensembles included Chanticleer, QuintEssence, and Gesualdo Six. Some of Canada's greatest singers made solo appearances: Maureen Forrester, Isabel Bayrakdarian, and Ben Heppner.

Solo piano recitals included such transcendent talents as Robert Silverman, Janina Fialkowska, Charles Richard-Hamelin, and David Jalbert.

Classic chamber music repertoire held an important place in the society's history. The Shostakovich, Minguet, and St. Lawrence String Quartets all made memorable visits to Abbotsford. The Gryphon Trio played in Abbotsford three times, and the recent performance by Ehnes, Tsang, and Armstrong was unforgettable.

Other diverse strings made an appearance. Guitars came in solo, trio, and quartet combinations. Rita Constanzi performed on a solo harp while harp ensembles brought several varied programs, as did the Langley Ukulele Ensemble.

There were some definite favourites among the many brass groups that performed. A Touch of Brass, Foothills Brass, and Cosmos Brass played here a combined fourteen times. Less common were woodwind ensembles such as the Prairie Winds from Chicago and the Winds of the Southern Cross from Brisbane, Australia.

The diversity of performing groups was endless. The Sidestreet Strutters were a Dixieland combo, Acclarion came with a clarinet and accordion, Sal Ferreras performed twice with a percussion ensemble, Trio Voronezh brought Russian music, there was a concert featuring only a bassoon and a guitar. Chris Jarrett performed a piano accompaniment to the silent film classic Battleship Potemkin. The actor Colin Fox narrated a program based on letters between Robert and Clara Schumann along with music by a soprano and piano.

People to Remember

George Zukerman was never a part of The Valley Concert Society, but he looms as an enormous figure throughout the history of the organization. He was a critical contributor during the restructuring of the society in its third year by providing performers who were touring in the area. He himself performed in Abbotsford



more than once on his bassoon as part of varied groups. He came to the rescue on one occasion when the Kiev Symphony Orchestra did not come as scheduled, and he filled in with a program entitled The Great Mozart Hunt. He also narrated programs, including his last one in April of 2022 less than a year before his death at age 95.

Paul Moritz was the founding president of The Valley Concert Society and provided effective leadership for that intrepid group that had the vision to bring this kind of music to our city. He served intermittently in that position until 1997. The society recognized his important contribution by naming a bursary in his honour.

Lorna Keith was the longest serving president in the society's history. She assumed that position after Paul Moritz stepped down until her retirement in 2014. She guided the organization through the transition from the Abby Arts Centre to the Matsqui Centennial Auditorium as performing venues. The society named the endowment fund that it holds at the Abbotsford Community Foundation in her honour, a fitting tribute as she played a key role in establishing that fund.

Liz Carter was the last remaining charter member of the board when she passed away during the season in 2015. While not very visible publicly, she was enormously valuable behind the scenes. She chaired the committee that programmed each season. She was the Volunteer Coordinator. She was the House Manager. Liz had her hands on most of the organization's key functions. It was a considerable challenge to replace her many roles on short notice. The society honoured her memory by giving her name to its pre-concert talk.

VCS Contributes to the Community

The Valley Concert Society has two key elements in its mission statement. Providing concerts and other musical performances is the obvious one. The second is to support the musical education of young people in the community. The organization addresses this goal in several ways.



■ *Bursaries*

The Valley Concert Society has created two bursaries to be given annually to deserving music students in the community. They are named in honour of two founding board members, Paul Moritz and Marjorie Nixon. The value of the awards has increased over the years and currently stands at \$500. The society also provides a scholarship for the Abbotsford Music Festival named in honour of former board member Rudy Baerg at a value of \$200.

■ *Master Classes*

Since 2016, The Valley Concert Society has been holding master classes which give talented young music students the opportunity to work on a prepared piece of music with some of the artists that we bring to our stage. Piano students have had the privilege of working with such luminaries as Jane Coop and Charles Richard-Hamelin. In alternate years, string students have worked with the likes of Bryan Cheng, Nancy Dahn, and are working with violist Molly Carr this year.

■ *Performances*

The society has provided several opportunities for local music students to perform publicly. At its 25th and 35th anniversaries, it presented a concert of former bursary winners. This gave the audience the opportunity to experience the talent of these remarkable young people. The society has also programmed two past bursary winners in its regular season, recognizing their growth as musicians.

■ *Community Outreach*

In the season just past, The Valley Concert Society has initiated a new venture aimed at allowing various members of the community to enjoy the wonderful artistry of our performers. Axiom Brass played for seniors in a high-rise complex, and for children participating in a Day Camp at The Reach. This year the society is presenting an outreach concert to the community served by the Salvation Army. These concerts come at no cost to the audience.



Season Calendar

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**Pocket Symphonies****Thursday, October 2, 2025**

Pianists Marcel and Elizabeth Bergmann will be joined by violinist Jasper Wood and cellist Sungyong Lim to bring arrangements of works written for full orchestras including Beethoven's 5th Symphony and Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture.

Jeneba Kanneh-Mason**Friday, February 20, 2026**

A member of Britain's most famous musical family, this young pianist is captivating audiences with her maturity in performance and interpretation. She brings a program that includes Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, and Florence Price, among others.

Gryphon Trio**Friday, November 14, 2025**

A Canadian musical treasure and one of the world's foremost trios, the Gryphon Trio is entering its fourth decade of performance. We are thrilled to welcome this much-loved prize-winning ensemble back to Abbotsford.

Suzie LeBlanc**Friday, March 27, 2026**

Beloved Canadian soprano Suzie LeBlanc will be joined by Alexander Weiman, harpsichord, Chloe Meyers, baroque violin, and Grégoire Jeay, traverso and percussion to bring a program of Purcell, Bach, and traditional tunes.

Subscription can be purchased for all 6 concerts at \$140 for adults, \$130 seniors and \$60 for students. The Tickets for individual concerts will be available online at \$32 for adults/seniors and \$20 for students.

Buzz Brass**Thursday, January 22, 2026**

With a name that denotes both excitement and the technique of blowing into brass instruments, this Montreal-based quintet has delighted audiences worldwide. They will bring a varied program entitled Famous Inspirations.

Cheng² Duo / James Campbell**Friday, April 24, 2026**

The brilliant young duo of cellist Bryan Cheng and his sister Silvie, piano, will partner with the dean of Canadian clarinetists James Campbell to perform classics by Beethoven and Brahms along with contemporary klezmer music and other works.

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Valley Concert Society Membership

Valley Concert Society (VCS) is a not-for-profit society incorporated in BC.

We invite you to become a member of the society.

COST: \$10 per person annually

BENEFITS: Vote at General Meetings.

Invitations to special events.

Reserved seating at concerts.

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