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The Valley Concert Society supports a scent-free environment for the enjoyment and well-being of everyone in the audience.
No unauthorized photography or electronic recordings are allowed during today's performance.

Schumann to Newman

A Liederkreis • Robert Schumann

Liederkreis Op. 24

Morgens steh'ich auf und frage

Es treibt mich hin

Ich wandelte unter den Bäumen

Lieb' Liebchen

Schöne Wiege meine leiden

Warte, warte wilder Schiffmann

Berg und Burgen schaun herunter

Anfangs wolltich fasst verzagen

Mit Myrten und Rosen

Cécile Chaminade

Autrefois **Interlude** **Courante**

INTERMISSION

Folk Songs (an English Liederkreis…) • Benjamin Britten

Come you not from Newcastle

The Ploughboy

Sally in our alley

The foggy, foggy dew

Early one morning

"In-tolerance"; another kind of Liederkreis • Randy Newman

Lonely at the top

Simon Smith and the amazing dancing bear

Short people

Sail Away

Mama told me not to come

Marie

Real emotional girl

Love story

Dayton Ohio

Artist Profiles

Benjamin Butterfield



Praised by *The New York Times* as, "clarion-voiced and vibrant," Benjamin Butterfield is known for his performances throughout North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. He has performed with many of the world's leading conductors including Sir Andrew Davis, James Conlon, Nicholas McGegan, Charles Dutoit, Leonard Slatkin, Bramwell Tovey, Seiji Ozawa, Bernard Labadie, Yannick Nezet-Seguin, Jeffrey Thomas, Trevor Pinnock, Bruno Weil and Marc Minkowski.

In recent seasons Butterfield has made multiple appearances with the Baltimore, Nashville, Houston, St. Louis, and Vancouver Symphonies; and the Calgary Philharmonic. He performs regularly with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem including their annual Bach Festival and in his hometown with Victoria Symphony, Victoria Choral Society, Victoria Philharmonic Choir, and White Rock Concerts.

Recent performance highlights include Carnegie Hall with Orchestra of St. Luke's (Haydn's *Creation*), Lincoln Center with American Classical Orchestra, Utah Symphony (Mozart's *Requiem*), Kansas City Symphony (*Messiah*), Haydn Masses with San Diego Symphony and Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, and Britten's *Serenade* and *War Requiem* with L' Orchestre Lyrique de Montreal and Victoria Symphony. Butterfield has also appeared at Pacific Baroque Festival under conductor Marc Destrubé, Luminous Voices (Mozart's *Requiem*), Elgin Symphony (Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*), and the Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival in Vermont (Schubert's *Auf dem Strom* and Janacek's *The Diary of one who Disappeared*). He makes frequent appearances with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem including their annual 2-week Bach Festival.

Most recently as an interpreter of opera, he portrayed the role of Mime in *Das Rheingold* with Pacific Opera and was stage director for Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* at the Amalfi Coast Music Festival. Other operatic roles include Grimoaldo in Handel's *Rodelinda* and Jupiter in *Semele* with Pacific Opera Victoria, Frère Massée in Messiaen's *St. François d'Assise* with Kent Nagano and the Montreal Symphony, Tamino in *The Magic Flute* with the Toronto Symphony and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* with Calgary Opera.

A prolific recording artist, he has recorded for Analekta, Dorian, CBC Records, Koch International and Timpani (France). He has also been featured in *Messiah* on ZDF at the Handel-Festspiele Halle with Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert and on CBC Radio as a guest host for *This is my Music*. Recently Mr. Butterfield recorded the *St. John Passion* with the Bach Choir of Bethlehem



(Analekta), the Rhien transcription of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* for Yellow Barn and a sixth CD of *Ukrainian Art Song* for the Ukrainian Art Song Project in Toronto.

In fall of 2018, Butterfield was named a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, the country's highest academic honor. Professor, head of voice, and co-head of performance for the School of Music at the University of Victoria, he was the 2015 recipient of the UVic. Craigdarroch Award for Excellence in Artistic Expression. He has also served as guest faculty for Opera Nuova, the Amalfi Coast Music Festival in Italy, The Victoria Conservatory Summer Vocal Academy, Vancouver International Song Institute, Yellow Barn, and Opera on the Avalon.

Sarah Hagen



Canadian pianist Sarah Hagen's extensive touring has taken her across Canada, to Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany and Italy, and twice to New York City's Carnegie Hall. Awarded as Artist of the Year by both Ontario Contact (2017) and the BC Touring Council (2015), and mentioned by *The Guardian* (Charlottetown) as the Best Classical Performance of 2014, her interpretations have been described as "outstandingly inventive" [*University of Waterloo Gazette*], "played flawlessly" [*Review- Vancouver*].

A visionary and an idealist, Sarah's performances are conceptually innovative, involving photography, dance and spoken word. She is Artistic Director for Pro'ject Sound, a performance project involving live piano with large-scale projected images. Her collaboration "Exultation" with Canadian Slam Poetry Champion Brendan McLeod explored Rachmaninoff's complete Opus 32 Preludes through poetry and storytelling.

An avid collaborator, Sarah has performed with cellist Ariel Barnes, violist Nicolò Eugelmi, cellist Phillip Hansen, violinist Robert Uchida, tenor Benjamin Butterfield, horn player Oto Carrillo, soprano Barbara Livingston, Trio Accord, Ballet Victoria, the Emily Carr String Quartet, the Bergmann Piano Duo, jazz pianist Søren Bebe, clarinettist Keith MacLeod, among many others. Sarah has appeared as soloist with the Victoria Symphony under the baton of Mei-Ann Chen, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony conducted by Mark Skazinetsky, the West Coast Symphony Orchestra with conductor Bujar Llapaj, the Prince Edward Island Symphony under the baton of Mark Shapiro, and the Symphony Orchestra of the Pacific with conductor Arthur Arnold. As a First Prize Winner in the 2013 Bradshaw & Buono International Piano Competition, Sarah was awarded the opportunity to perform solo at New York City's Carnegie Hall in May 2013.

In 2021 Sarah released her fourth album, *J.S. Bach: Goldberg Variations,* which was heralded by *Whole Note Magazine* as "something to absolutely die for" and won two 2022 Music PEI

awards for Instrumental Recording of the Year and Album Art of the Year. Her previous albums include *Women of Note*, featuring two female composers of the 19th century, which won the 2021 Music PEI Instrumental Recording of the Year; *Devoted: Music of Robert & Clara Schumann* with violinist Martin Chalifour, concertmaster of the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and *Glass House Dancing,* which was nominated for Classical Recording of the Year at the 2009 Western Canadian Music Awards.



Sarah has been heard nationally on CBC Radio 2's *In Concert* in a live recording with violinist Joan Blackman and cellist Ariel Barnes. She was also featured in a live recording and discussion of Schumann's Papillons on CBC Radio One's North by Northwest with host Sheryl MacKay. In Helsingborg, Sweden in 2006 she recorded with Swedish cellist Marit Sjödin, creating *Concealed Diamonds,* an album of masterworks for cello and piano. Sarah has completed five residencies at the Banff Centre for the Arts and enjoyed two terms there as collaborative pianist.

During her years on the west coast of Canada, Sarah founded nine concert series, curating each one individually, and inviting artists from across Canada and around the world to share the stage with her. She has toured throughout Sweden numerous times with cellist Marit Sjödin, violinist Ian Peaston, and Per Johansson, principal clarinet of the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra. Other international concerts of note include a recital at DePaul University with Oto Carrillo, hornist in the Chicago Symphony, Schumann Piano Quintet in Darmstadt with members of the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, and a performance at Carnegie Hall with Polish flautist Krzysztof Kaczka.

In addition to writing wine reviews for her blog, "ARTIST WINES! - Uncorking musician-priced cellar secrets," Sarah is an awkward but enthusiastic tap dancer. She also tours a one-woman musical comedy show called "Perk up, pianist!" of which the *Edmonton Journal* wrote, "Her comic timing is as solid as her musical meter."

Sarah's motivation is the belief that music has the power to be a window into our souls regardless of age or knowledge.



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.

Over Forty Years of Outstanding Music

The Valley Concert Society has brought more than 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 $1,000. 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, Molly Carr, and violinist Karl Stobbe.

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.



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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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valleyconcertsociety.com

Our 2026–27 Season



OUR 44TH SEASON 2026–2027

Subscriptions can be purchased for all 6 concerts at $150 for adults, $140 seniors and $60 for students. The Tickets for individual concerts will be available online at $35 for adults/seniors and $20 for students.

Pacific Baroque Orchestra

Friday, October 16, 2026



Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* headlines a program of night music by one of Canada's most exciting ensembles under the leadership of Artistic Director Alexander Weimann.

Butterfield & Hagen

Friday, November 20, 2026



One of Canada's leading tenors is joined by pianist Sarah Hagen to bring a program of two song cycles by the romantic Robert Schumann and the witty Randy Newman.

Fire & Grace & Ash

Friday, February 12, 2027



This eclectic collaboration between violinist Edwin Huizinga, guitarist William Coulter, and mandolinist Ashley Hoyer explores the connections between classical, folk, and contemporary traditions.

Stobbe & Williamson

Friday, March 5, 2027



Karl Stobbe, concertmaster of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, joins Mission's own Paul Williamson, a piano instructor at the U. of Manitoba, in a program of Biber, Beethoven, Morlock, and Strauss.

Swensen & Pohjonen

Friday, April 9, 2027



Danish cellist Jonathan Swensen and Finnish pianist Juho Pohjonen are both prize-winning musicians. Their program includes works by Fauré, Pärt, Poulenc, and Chopin.

Federico Colli

Friday, April 30, 2027



Known both as a brilliant pianist and a creative original thinker, the Italian Federico Colli brings an insightful sensibility to the music of Scarlatti, Debussy, Schubert, and Mozart.





