

WINDSOR **SYMPHONY** ORCHESTRA

# IN TUNE

2025-2026 • ISSUE 2



## **HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season from the WSO family

## **SHARING THE LOVE OF MUSIC**

The impact of the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra

**JULIAN  
JEUN**  
Principal Percussion

**JACOB  
MANNION**  
Timpani

**TIMOTHY  
FRANCOM**  
Percussion



WINDSOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

# 2025-2026 SEASON



**HANDEL'S  
MESSIAH**  
December 4 to 7



**HOLIDAY  
POPS**  
December 20 & 21



**FAMILY CONCERT:  
ROBERT MUNSCH**  
January 10



**A TASTE  
OF ITALY**  
January 15 & 16



**BEAUTY AND  
THE BEAT**  
January 24 & 25



**THE MUSIC OF  
LED ZEPPELIN  
& THE WHO**  
January 30



**FAMILY CONCERT:  
BROADWAY  
FOR KIDS**  
February 7



**LEE SIEGEL SINGS  
BROADWAY**  
February 14 & 15



**SERENADE FOR  
STRINGS**  
February 19 & 20



**MEDELSSOHN'S  
ELIJAH**  
March 7 & 8



**LILLIAN PLAYS  
BOCCHERINI**  
March 12 & 13



**FAMILY CONCERT:  
LIFT EVERY VOICE**  
March 14



**FAMILY CONCERT:  
THE JUNGLE  
BOOK**  
April 11



**SULTANS OF  
STRING RETURN**  
April 18 & 19



**FROM MOZART  
TO COPLAND**  
April 23 & 24



**RACHMANINOFF**  
May 2 & 3

**WINDSORSYMPHONY.COM**

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### PHOTOGRAPHY & RECORDING NOTICE



When you attend a WSO event or program, you enter an area where filming, photography, audio, and video recording may take place by authorized personnel. With this notice you have been informed of your consent, waiver of liability, and release before entering this event. Please inform theatre staff if you have a concern. Please note that any recording of performances, either through video or photography, is prohibited. A reminder that mobile phones should be silenced.

# A Message from Board President **Kyle Kootstra**



As I step into the role of Board President, I want to express my gratitude to past President Deborah Severs. I am inspired by the energy, dedication, and leadership that Deb brought to this role over the last four years. I look forward to continuing to build on the many successes that the WSO experienced during her tenure.

Our recent Annual General Meeting luncheon was a resounding success; guest speaker Katherine Carleton (Executive Director, Orchestras Canada) reminded us why Windsor truly needs its orchestra. Our Board of Directors continues to work on strategic priorities to enhance the future of the WSO.

Partnerships with AWE, WIFF, St. Clair College, University of Windsor, and our downtown community remain strong and vital.

As we approach the holiday season, I invite you to join us in celebrating the joy and connection that music brings. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the WSO.

Warm wishes for a wonderful holiday season!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Kootstra". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Kyle Kootstra**

Board President, Windsor Symphony Orchestra

## *Land Acknowledgement*

through the Three Fires Confederacy — the Ojibwa, the Odawa and the Potawatomi Nations. We are honoured to be hosted on Wawiiatanong, what is now known as the Windsor-Essex region along the straits of Detroit, and acknowledge their enduring presence on this land. The Windsor Symphony Orchestra is committed to honouring Indigenous history and culture while moving forward towards mutual respect, reciprocity and responsibility. We know that reconciliation is not a single act or a moment in time — it is a journey that begins with listening, acknowledging, and honoring the truth.

We acknowledge that our concert is taking place on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe. Many nations have cared for this land since its earliest days: the Wendat, the Haudanousaunee Nations and

# A Message from **Mayor Drew Dilkens**



**H**appy 78th Anniversary to the Windsor Symphony Orchestra! This incredible organization and its artists are a true pillar of our community and have been a creative powerhouse for nearly eight decades. The 2025-2026 season once again invites you to experience *Your City, Your Symphony*, with a lineup of Gershwin, Rachmaninov, Star Wars, Motown, Italian Baroque, and more – guaranteeing there’s something for everyone!

Together, we are all Building Windsor’s Future with a focus on investment, growth, and sustainability – including through support and celebration of the arts. As Windsor continues to experience unprecedented growth and development, we remain committed to our work to Strengthen the Core of our downtown by leveraging all opportunities ahead of us, and creating experiences that attract new investments, businesses, residents, and visitors. From its home base at the City-owned historic Capitol Theatre, the WSO remains a key piece of the puzzle of downtown revitalization and economic development through arts and culture. I was proud to stand alongside the WSO and welcome everyone to September’s “Classical in the Concrete,” where we unveiled the “Park in Perfect Harmony” installation naming and theming parking levels after classical composers, alongside “The Language of My World” murals celebrating artistic creativity; and where we honoured the late Maestro Robert Franz by naming the rooftop level in his honour. I invite everyone to visit the Pelissier Street Parking Garage to see these meaningful new installations.

This season began with Gershwin, who believed that music should reflect the culture and society in which it is created, and that it should resonate with the collective consciousness and experiences of the people, capturing their emotions, ideas, and the spirit of a time. As we gather throughout this season – curated for us by Robert Franz – to be entertained and enlightened, moved and inspired, inside the theatre and beyond its walls, please take a moment to appreciate how music moves us and makes our community better, stronger, and more vibrant. Enjoy the music of the WSO!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Drew Dilkens". The signature is stylized and cursive.

**Mayor Drew Dilkens**, City of Windsor

# Board & Administration

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The late Herb Stammer  
Madelyn Weingarden and  
the late Arthur Weingarden

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### MUSICIANS' REPRESENTATIVE

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Robert Franz (2013-2025)  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Jamie Sommerville  
ARTISTIC ADVISOR

Geoffrey Larson  
RESIDENT CONDUCTOR

Dr. Bruce J.G. Kotowich  
CHORUS MASTER

---

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Jamie Sommerville, *Artistic Advisor*  
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Dr. Bruce J.G. Kotowich, *Chorus Master*  
John Morris Russell, *Conductor Laureate*

**VIOLIN**

Lillian Scheirich  
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*Chair endowed by the Morris & Beverly Baker Foundation*  
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SECOND VIOLIN\*  
Ewa Uziel\*  
Min Xie\*  
Weihong Wang\*  
Suhashini Arulanandam  
Andrew Bensler  
Natasha Penny  
Vera Sherwood

**VIOLA**

Roman Kosarev  
PRINCIPAL VIOLA\*  
Nicholas Penny  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL VIOLA\*  
Pola Luboniecka\*  
Martina Smazal

**CELLO**

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PRINCIPAL CELLO\*  
*Chair endowed in memory of Alessandro P. Toldo*  
Sonya Nanos Hodgson  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL CELLO\*  
Peter Wiebe\*  
Jacob MacDonald

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PRINCIPAL BASS\*  
Marilyn Fung  
Reuven Rothman

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Jean-François Rompré  
PRINCIPAL FLUTE\*  
Liesel Deppe

**OBOE**

Graham Mackenzie  
PRINCIPAL OBOE\*  
Faith Scholfield

**CLARINET**

Graham Lord  
PRINCIPAL CLARINET\*  
Margaret Gillie

**BASSOON**

Thomas Roy-Rochette  
PRINCIPAL BASSOON\*  
Julie Shier

**HORN**

Iris Krizmanic  
PRINCIPAL HORN\*  
Tamara Kosinski  
Timothy Lockwood  
Nicole Alexander

**TRUMPET**

Ross Turner  
PRINCIPAL TRUMPET  
Philip Séguin

**TROMBONE**

Benjamin Storm  
PRINCIPAL TROMBONE  
Corey Fitzpatrick  
Michael Stone

**PERCUSSION**

Julian Jeun  
PRINCIPAL PERCUSSION  
Timothy Francom

**TIMPANI**

Jacob Mannion

\*Education & Community  
Outreach Musician (ECO)



# GEOFFREY LARSON

RESIDENT CONDUCTOR

**G**eoffrey Larson serves as WSO Resident Conductor and Music Director of the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra. He previously served as Assistant Conductor and Chorus Master of Berkshire Opera Festival for eight seasons of

productions in Massachusetts and New York City.

Geoffrey was awarded second prize in the 2021 International Orchestral Conducting Competition “UAL” in Spain, and has conducted orchestras such as the Spokane Symphony, South Bend Symphony, Bainbridge Symphony, Northwest Mahler Festival, Karlovy Vary Symphony Orchestra (Czech Republic), and Pleven Philharmonic (Bulgaria). Passionate about the music of our time, Geoffrey has collaborated with composers such as Gabriel Prokofiev, Anthony Davis, Anna Clyne, and Reza Vali.

Geoffrey is a doctoral candidate at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he served as Assistant Conductor of IU Opera and Ballet Theatre. He counts Arthur Fagen, Walter Huff, David Neely, Thomas Wilkins, Robert Page, and George Hurst among his teachers in conducting.



# DR. BRUCE J.G. KOTOWICH

CHORUS MASTER

**D**r. Bruce J. G. Kotowich, DMA, is the Interim Director of School of Creative Arts (SoCA) and an Associate Professor of Music-Director of Choral Activities at the University of Windsor. He directs the University of Windsor Chamber Choir and USingers

and teaches courses in choral techniques. He currently serves as the Chorus Master for the Windsor Symphony Orchestra Chorus and the Artistic Director of the Windsor Classic Chorale.

Dr. Kotowich completed his Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting and Masters of Music in Conducting at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He received his Associateship of Music in Vocal Performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto.

His choirs have performed throughout North America, Europe, and China, including a group of Windsor Essex choristers at Carnegie Hall, New York.



# Midwinter Musical Feast

**Monday, February 2, 2026**

**Nico Walkerville  
(325 Devonshire Road)**

The WSO's coziest tradition is back!  
Warm up with the WSO at Nico's Walkerville  
location. Join us for a delicious meal, wonderful  
music and a glass of wine.

**Your ticket supports the WSO's Education  
and Community Outreach programs.**

**WINDSORSYMPHONY.COM**

# LEGACY OF LOVE: PRICELESS

## THE IMPACT OF THE WINDSOR SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA



LEFT: Samantha Hammermeister at the piano, age one. RIGHT: Samantha's son at the piano.

As parents, we wish to give our children what they need to grow and thrive. What could we possibly give our kids today that would leave a lasting impact on them and future generations?

For one family it all started with a toddler tinkering away at a piano....

Samantha Hammermeister's mother saw the sparkle in her eye as she would crawl up to the piano, barely able to walk and gently press the keys of the family's piano. Being a talented vocalist for her church and pianist herself, Marilyn Hammermeister knew that the greatest gift she could give her daughter was the love of music. So at the young age of three Samantha began piano lessons.

The love of music quickly became the focal point in Samantha's life, playing in school bands, choirs, and even the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra (WSYO) as a violinist and violist. However, something that had left a lasting impact on her was all the performances she attended with her mother.

"I have so many cherished memories with Mama. We would go on long car rides and sing together all the time. She would take me to musicals, ballets and Windsor Symphony Orchestra concerts whenever she could. I'm so grateful for all that she did to make sure I had these experiences growing up," Samantha said. "It makes up a big part

of who I am today, and I still lean on the music and the memories.”

A melody can carry so much meaning, a memory, and even a legacy of love.

As a single mom of a spirited six-year-old, Samantha now tries to balance it all, including going back to school herself for a Bachelor of Theology. On a student's budget, Samantha was wondering if she would be able to carry on the musical legacy her mother left by bringing her son to symphony concerts while paying for her education.

“Everything is so expensive these days, but the gift of music is invaluable. The Windsor Symphony Orchestra offers affordable ticket prices for all families, so that I can bring my son. We’ve been to several of the Family Concerts together and he absolutely loves them. Knowing that the WSO is supporting students and families so they can share these experiences like I did with my mother means the world to me. Every student deserves these opportunities. It is a legacy of love and music, and to me that is *priceless*.”

# Where the Music Begins



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**Faith  
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OBOE

## FAITH SCHOLFIELD

### OBOE

#### **How did you get started on your instrument?**

We'd just moved to the US from Canada and I really wanted to be one of the cool kids and play the flute... but flutes were popular and you had to pay to rent a flute. My grade six band director, Ms. Calzone, handed me an oboe and told me to give it a try. It ended up being love at first quack: I realized the oboe provided me with the opportunity to annoy my little brother and that I was much too cool to be just one more flute player in the crowd. (No offense to flutists intended!)

#### **What is something significant about your instrument?**

Unlike string instruments, oboes generally do not live long lives: this is because the air pressure used causes the inside of the bore to expand and change the more it's played. My current oboe is nine years old, which is old for most professional oboists who replace their horns every five years. My instruments are all made from an African blackwood called mpingo in Swahili, also known as grenadilla — this is the same wood used for clarinets. Mpingo is a slow growth tree, not reaching harvestable age until 70-100 years, and is native to 26 African countries. The wood used for instruments comes from the black heartwood of the tree, which has been an important part of east African (especially Tanzanian) society, for many years, with various parts of the mpingo tree being used as medicine, grazing for elephants and giraffes, and by Makonde carvers to create sculptures, art, and jewelry.

#### **What is your favourite WSO moment?**

I don't know that I can choose just one. Probably every time we've performed Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G Major* because Ravel gives the English horn (me) some serious stardom in the 2nd movement. Though I anticipate that playing Copland's *Quiet City* with WSO Principal Trumpet, Ross Turner, and guest conductor Yi-Ping Chen in April 2026 will soon become a new favourite memory!

#### **What is your concert routine?**

Pre-concert: Since I'm also Director of Operations, my pre-concert routine consists of whatever the musicians/crew/theatre needs prior to the concert. I always make sure I am in my seat 30-minutes prior to downbeat to warm-up and make sure my reeds are behaving. Post-concert: It depends — sometimes a drink and a late night walk to shake off the adrenaline. Other times a good book, my couch, and a cat on my lap.

#### **An interesting fact about yourself!**

When I was about 11 (the same age at which I started the oboe), I really wanted to be a marine biologist and work with whales. My amazing parents took my brother and I out to B.C. As part of the trip, my family booked a tour guide and a zodiac to go out onto the ocean and see humpback whales. Once we were out to sea I began to feel a bit seasick. Then a pod of humpback whales appeared around us and I was in heaven... until the animal of my dream career came up right next to us and I was very, very seasick all over the glorious creature. That required an immediate change in my career planning and so I decided to become an oboist!

**TOLDO POPS SERIES**

# DISCO AND MOTOWN

**Saturday, November 22, 2025 | 7:30pm**

**Sunday, November 23, 2025 | 2:30pm**

**The Capitol Theatre, Windsor, ON**

Geoffrey Larson, conductor

Jeans 'n Classics:

Gavin Hope, lead vocals | Robyn Black, backup vocals  
Katalin Kiss, backup vocals | Kathryn Rose, backup vocals

Holland, Dozier, Holland / Peter Brennan	Reach Out
Benson, Cleveland, Gaye / Brennan	What's Goin' On
Whitfield, Holland Jr / Brennan	Ain't Too Proud to Beg
Robinson, Moore / Brennan	Ooh Baby Baby
Stevie Wonder / Jeff Christmas	I Wish
Robinson, White / Brennan	My Girl
Melvin & Mervin Steals / Brennan	Could It Be I'm Falling in Love
Van Mccoy / Brennan	The Hustle
Cooper, Pilate li / Brennan	Love's Train

## INTERMISSION

Bellotte, Faltermeyer, Forsey / Brennan	Hot Stuff
Ailin, Lipa, Ronson, Wyatt / Brennan	Dance the Night
Gamble, Huffs / Brennan	You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine
Barry, Robin, Maurice Gibb / Brennan	If I Can't Have You
Barry, Robin, Maurice Gibb / Brennan	Stayin' Alive
Barry White / Brennan	Can't Get Enough of Your Love Babe
Crewe, Nolan / Brennan	Lady Marmalade
Greene, Kersey / Brennan	Disco Inferno
Anderson, Andersson, Ulvaeus / Brennan	Dancing Queen

Series Sponsor

**The Toldo Foundation** 

# JEANS 'N CLASSICS



Peter Brennan's Jeans 'n Classics has been a transformative force in orchestral music for over 27 years. By blending worldclass rock musicians with symphonies, the ensemble has revolutionized the orchestral experience, helping orchestras reach a wider and more diverse audience. Jeans 'n Classics' innovative approach has engaged listeners across generations, breathing new life into symphonic performances.

At its core, Jeans 'n Classics is a collective of accomplished musicians who are deeply connected to both the rock and orchestral worlds. Their goal is to nurture and expand symphonic audiences, bringing in new fans while maintaining rich traditions. The band's dynamic arrangements bring a fresh perspective to classic rock and pop albums, offering reinterpretations that remain familiar yet distinctive, setting each performance apart. With nearly

1,000 original orchestrations, Jeans 'n Classics has curated an impressive portfolio of 45 captivating productions, collaborating with over 100 orchestras across North America. Their orchestrations have received global acclaim for their lush, rock-infused arrangements that emphasize the orchestra's rich tones while celebrating the energy of iconic rock songs.

Jeans 'n Classics musicians are known for their exceptional professionalism and artistic finesse. Whether in rehearsal or on stage, their skillful performances consistently deliver unforgettable live experiences. As the group continues to shape the landscape of symphonic rock, its legacy of innovation and passion remains integral to the success and evolution of orchestral performances today.

Jeans 'n Classics founder Peter Brennan passed away in October 2025.



Windsor **Symphony Youth** Orchestras  
Geoffrey Larson, Conductor

**WINDSOR SYMPHONY YOUTH ORCHESTRA**

# All the World's a Stage

**Sunday, November 30, 2025 | 7:00pm**  
**The Capitol Theatre, Windsor, ON**

Geoffrey Larson, conductor  
Norah Bellmore, violin  
Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra  
Windsor Symphony Junior Youth Orchestra  
With Special Guests from Tecumseh Vista Academy and  
Assumption College Catholic High School

## **Windsor Symphony Junior Youth Orchestra**

Stephen Bulla	Wonderland Overture
James Kazik	Nobles of the Sword
Engelbert Humperdinck / arr. del Borgo	"Evening Prayer" from <i>Hansel and Gretel</i>
Adrian Gordon	Echoes of Valor

## **Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra**

Sergei Prokofiev / arr. Isaac	"The Montagues and Capulets" from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Sergei Prokofiev / arr. Isaac	"Dance of the Knights" from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Giuseppe Verdi / arr. Larson	"Anvil Chorus" from <i>Il Trovatore</i>
Edvard Grieg	"Solveig's Song" from <i>Peer Gynt Suite No. 2</i>
Charles Auguste de Bériot	Scène de ballet
Leonard Bernstein / arr. Mason	Selections from <i>West Side Story</i>

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# NORAH BELLMORE

VIOLIN



Norah Bellmore is a 15-year-old student at Assumption High School who began studying violin at the age of three under the guidance of Ruth Wiebe. She quickly fell in love with the instrument and has since become a versatile and passionate musician. In addition to violin, Norah plays piano, French horn, trombone, and saxophone. Her dedication has earned her numerous accolades, including first place in the Windsor Symphony Guild Competition, the Johannes Pouti Trophy for Most Distinguished Intermediate

String, the Lawrence Bensette Trophy, and the Steve Kuli Award for Canadian Composers, among others.

Currently preparing for her Level 10 violin examination, Norah performs throughout Windsor-Essex at private and corporate events and tours local schools each summer with members of the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra, bringing music education to students across the region. She is deeply grateful to her parents, family, friends and violin teacher, for their constant support and encouragement.



**Love what you hear?**

*Give the gift of music!*

Gift cards are available at the Box Office and online.  
Valid for all WSO performances.

# Handel's Messiah

**Thursday, December 4, 2025** | Assumption Church, Windsor  
**Friday, December 5, 2025** | Leamington United, Leamington  
**Saturday, December 6, 2025** | Saint Matthew's Church, Windsor  
**Sunday, December 7, 2025** | Ste. Anne's Parish, Tecumseh

Geoffrey Larson, conductor  
Sydney Baedke, soprano  
Giles Tomkins, bass-baritone  
Windsor Classic Chorale  
Bruce J.G. Kotowich, chorus master

George Frideric Handel

**PART I**

Overture (Sinfonia)  
And the glory of the Lord  
Thus saith the Lord  
And He shall purify  
For behold, darkness  
The people that walked in darkness  
For unto us a Child is born  
Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)  
There were shepherds  
And lo, the angel of the Lord came  
upon them  
And the angel said unto them  
And suddenly  
Glory to God  
Rejoice greatly

**PART II**

Behold the Lamb of God  
How beautiful are the feet  
Hallelujah

**PART III**

I know that my Redeemer  
Since by man came death  
Behold, I tell you a mystery  
The trumpet shall sound  
Worthy is the Lamb; Amen

---

Concert Sponsor:



Concert Sponsor:



*Partial funding for the Our Lady of Assumption Church performance has been provided by The Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan.*

# SYDNEY BAEDKE

## SOPRANO



Soprano Sydney Baedke has been described as possessing an “impressively rich” and “exquisitely lyric” instrument (*London Unattached*, *The Guardian*). Named one of the CBC’s top musicians under 30, recent performances include Contessa Almaviva for Pacific Opera Victoria’s *Le Nozze di Figaro*, The Female Chorus in Britten’s *The Rape of Lucretia* (Royal Opera House), Ma Zegner in Ammolite Opera’s *Proving Up*, and both Mimi and Musetta in *La Bohème*. Additionally, she appeared as the soprano soloist in Bruckner’s *Te Deum* (Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra),

in concert at Carnegie Hall and the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, and as the soprano soloist in Handel’s *Messiah* and Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* with numerous orchestras across Canada. A first prize winner at Edmonton Opera’s prestigious Rumbold Vocal Competition, she returns this season to Montréal’s Maison Symphonique as Liu in OPCM’s *Turandot*, as well as appearing as Donna Anna for the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra’s *Don Giovanni* and Gertrudis in the German premiere production of Reznicek’s *TillEulenspiegel* with Theater für Niedersachsen.

*Happy Holidays!*

From our WSO family to yours,  
we wish you all the best this season.

The Box Office will be closed from December 23, 2025 to January 4, 2026. Tickets can be purchased online at anytime.



# GILES TOMKINS

BASS-BARITONE



Canadian/British bass-baritone Giles Tomkins is widely praised for his vocal virtuosity and lyricism in an impressive range of repertoire. His rich, resonant voice brings “authority and power” to the concert and operatic stage.

Acclaimed operatic roles for Giles include Fafner in *Das Rheingold*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Pistola in *Falstaff*, Superintendent Budd in *Albert Herring*, Colline in *La Bohème*, and Don Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Edmonton Opera).

A frequent performer with Canadian Opera Company, in 2024 Giles sang the roles of Parson and Badger in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*. He sang the role of Zuniga in Manitoba Opera's *Carmen*.

Giles begins the 2024-2025 season as Frank in Vancouver Opera's *Die Fledermaus*, the King in Pacific Opera Victoria's *The Little Prince*, and Hunding in Edmonton Opera's *Die Walküre*.

Giles has appeared as a guest soloist in *Messiah* with many of Canada's finest choirs and ensembles, including the Elmer Iseler Singers, Hamilton Philharmonic, and Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra. His extensive concert repertoire includes Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's productions of Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Regina Symphony Orchestra's production of Mozart's *Requiem*. Giles joined Chorus Niagara for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and returns in 2025 for Bach's *B Minor Mass*.



Dr. Bruce J.G. Kotowich, Chorus Master

**SOPRANO**

Jenny Brown  
Neesha Dunkley  
Julie Fraser  
Ryoko Onuki  
Mary Jeanne Peters  
Jan Radford  
Emily Ramirez Hayes  
Debbie Ridpath  
Jennifer Swanson  
Madison Toulouse

**ALTO**

Claudia den Boer  
Margot Forman  
Janice Forsyth  
Vicki Frederick  
Donna Hayes  
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# MESSIAH

## GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Handel's *Messiah* stands not only as one of history's greatest achievements in music written for chorus and orchestra, but also a conundrum of sorts. It is an English-language oratorio, premiered in Dublin, written by a German-born composer who became a British citizen and was famous for his operas in Italian. A normal oratorio is a narrative work for the concert stage, scored for chorus and orchestra, where vocal soloists commonly depict different characters in the telling of a (usually sacred) story. *Messiah* does not have a narrative through-line; instead, the piece offers a meditation on different aspects of Jesus Christ and his life, told from the point of view of humanity. The titular character is never present; indeed, the soloists do not portray any specific characters at all. However, the passion and drama of human emotion is present in every measure of Handel's masterpiece, from torturous pain and anger to the greatest joy and exaltation. Its first performances in 1743 found great success, and though London elites were scandalized by the use of opera singers in a theatre instead of a cantor in a church for such a sacred subject, it overcame accusations of blasphemy to become one of the most beloved and influential works of all time. When Beethoven called Handel "the greatest composer who ever lived," he cited *Messiah*; Mozart declared himself "to be humble in the face of Handel's genius."

Handel's librettist, Charles Jennens, adapted words from both the Old and

New Testaments to create the text of the oratorio, which has three parts. Each part is composed of scenes with choruses, solo arias, and quasi-spoken recitatives that provide further descriptive commentary. A somber overture and a pastoral symphonic interlude "Pifa" provide instrumental foreshadowing. Today's performance of an abbreviated *Messiah* includes material from each of the three parts, focusing on Handel's iconic choruses and arias for soprano and bass.

In Part I, the *Messiah's* coming and the virgin birth are predicted by the words of Old Testament prophets. The annunciation to the shepherds of the birth of Christ (Chorus "For unto us a child is born") is taken from the Gospel of Luke. Part II covers Christ's passion and his death, resurrection, and ascension. It portrays the first spreading of the gospel throughout the world, and a definitive statement of God's glory is summarized in the famous "Hallelujah Chorus." (A tradition of standing during the "Hallelujah Chorus" is said to date from a performance attended by King George II, who leaped to his feet and inspired the rest of the audience to follow suit.) Part III begins with the promise of redemption (Aria "I know that my redeemer liveth"), followed by a prediction of the day of judgment and the "general resurrection" (Aria "The trumpet shall sound"), ending with a final victory over sin and death and the acclamation of Christ.

*Program notes by Geoffrey Larson.*



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**Saturday, December 20, 2025 | 2:30pm & 7:30pm**

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**The Capitol Theatre, Windsor, ON**

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Charlotte Knight, soprano

Windsor Symphony Orchestra Chorus | Music Moves Kids Choir

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# CHARLOTTE KNIGHT

## SOPRANO



Raised in downtown Toronto, Canada, Charlotte began studying voice at the age of eight and went on to complete her Bachelor of Music at the University of Western Ontario. After working professionally in opera for several years – and never quite fitting in – she relocated to London, UK, to pursue a post-graduate diploma in Musical Theatre at the Associated Studios – and never looked back!

In July 2022, Charlotte made her debut at Feinstein's *54 Below*, performing in the 10th Anniversary Concert of Ryan Scott Oliver's award-winning song cycle *35MM: A Musical Exhibition*. She was among the last few actors still performing on stage in late March 2020 before the worldwide shutdown, playing the iconic role of Elsa in *Frozen, The Musical* with Disney Cruise Line, and she was one of the first theatre actors back to work mid-pandemic, playing the role of Sarah in the

Canadian premiere of *C-O-N-T-A-C-T* in downtown Toronto.

During the months of COVID lockdown in Canada, Charlotte began writing her first play entitled *LEMONS*, which received its first workshop performance in collaboration with Thousand Faced Theatre Company at the Soho Playhouse New York in summer 2021.

Pre-COVID, Charlotte split her time between Toronto and London, making her UK debut as Cinderella in *Into The Woods* at The Chelsea Theatre, immediately followed by the title role in the UK premiere of Strauss' *The Queen's Lace Handkerchief* with Opera Della Luna at Wilton's Music Hall. She won first place in the Stephen Sondheim Competition at the Associated Studios and appeared with Singers Achoired as a featured soloist and vocal captain in the UK premiere and promo tour for *Good Omens* with Amazon Prime.

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**In Memory of Amy Ley**

Windsor Federation of Musicians -  
Local 566  
Amy's MYC Colleagues:  
Renée Rutledge  
Jordyn Severin  
Sian Willard  
The Morris & Beverly Baker Foundation  
Aymeric, Greg & Armelle Atkinson  
Sally Blyth  
Monica Bunde

Kim Burak  
Mike and Joanne Chalwt  
Vicki and Paolo Collavino  
Carolyn Daley  
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Tom Dejarlais  
Nadine Deleury  
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Robert and Shirley Dunlop  
Doug and Randi Fox  
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Anthony Gyemi  
Susan B. Hale & Kenneth J. Hodgson  
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Glenna Hemphill  
Anne Jarvis and Brian Cross  
Pat Jeflyn  
Jennifer Lachapelle  
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Patti Lauzon and Mark Sarafin  
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Paul and Mary Meanwell  
Lauren Montague  
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Hans and Sherri Preuss  
Michael Ricketts  
Bernie and Nicole Rourke  
Stephanie Sant'Ambrogio  
Susan and Brian Scholfield  
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Nicette Scott  
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Music is for **Everyone**

# Legacy Donors

## CUMULATIVE GIFTS TO THE FUTURE FUND

The WSO Future Fund is an endowment fund where gifts are invested and restricted in perpetuity to support WSO operations each season.

The Future Fund is currently valued at over \$5 million, with a goal of \$10 million.

The WSO recognizes the vision and generosity of donors who have contributed to the Future Fund. If you are interested in becoming a Legacy Donor, please contact Patti Lauzon, Executive Director, at [plauzon@windsorsymphony.com](mailto:plauzon@windsorsymphony.com).

### Gifts in Tribute 2024-2025 Season

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Windsor Laser Eye Institute



# Accessibility at the WSO

**ACCESSIBLE SEATING:** Wheelchair spaces are accessible in the theatre. The Capitol Theatre main entry is located at ground level and is equipped with ramps and inclined floors. The theatre can accommodate standard-sized manual and electric wheelchairs on the main floor. These spaces are limited, please contact the box office to inquire about availability. Please note: because the Capital Theatre is a historical building, balcony seating is only accessible by stairs.

## **ACCESSIBLE PARKING**

A City of Windsor By-Law permits persons with disabilities to park in areas marked "Commercial" provided an Accessible Parking Permit (APP) is clearly displayed through the windshield and (if times are noted) designated parking times are adhered to.

**FREE SUPPORT WORKER TICKETS:** Those attending an event as a Support Worker can request a ticket, free of charge. Please call the Box Office.

**WASHROOM:** An accessible washroom is located in the lobby area.

**WALKERS:** The ushers will be happy to assist you with removing your walker from your seat, storing it in a designated area, and returning it to you after your event.

**THEATRE WHEELCHAIRS:** The Capitol Theatre has a manual wheelchair available to assist from the lobby entrance to your seat. Please notify an usher upon arrival to request a wheelchair.

**MOBILITY SCOOTERS:** The Capitol Theatre is unable to accommodate motorized scooters. Scooters can be parked in a designated spot in the lobby after entering and guests can transfer, with assistance, if necessary, to one of the theatre's manual wheelchairs prior to entering the event.

**Support Animals:** Any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to aid an individual with a disability can accompany a ticket holder. Please notify the Box Office at the point of purchase so that your seat can be selected to ensure adequate space for your support animal.

For accessible accommodations or seating requests, please contact the box office at [boxoffice@windsorsymphony.com](mailto:boxoffice@windsorsymphony.com) or call 519-973-1238. More detail on accessibility can be found at [capitoltheatrewindsor.ca/accessibility](http://capitoltheatrewindsor.ca/accessibility).





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# GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC!

The WSO performs mainly at the Capitol Theatre, but we also take the orchestra on the road throughout Windsor Essex County. Each concert requires sheet music purchases for each instrument in the orchestra. Youth orchestra rehearsals require snacks to keep young minds fueled. The costs of bringing the joy and excitement of live music to these venues can be daunting—your support ensures that the WSO can continue to entertain and inspire beyond the curtains of the Capitol Theatre.

Your generous gift will support the following:

## *WSO Wish List / items*

- \$100** Healthy snacks for our youth orchestra rehearsals and concerts
- \$250** Maestro visits to local high schools to work with their bands
- \$500** Education Concerts PLUS Strings in Schools Project
- \$750** Music for Health – free concerts at long-term care homes, senior centres, and local hospitals
- \$1000** Community Outreach – Taking the WSO out into the community
- \$2000** Musicians' sheet music
- \$2500** WSO's Future Fund – help grow our endowment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please acknowledge me in the concert program as: \_\_\_\_\_

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