

Dream Big bios

Colin Ainsworth, tenor (*Performer, February 22*)

Colin Ainsworth has appeared with various opera companies including the Canadian Opera Company, Seattle Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, Pacific Opera Victoria, and the Royal Opera (London) performing as Lensky in Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin, Tom in Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress, and Steuerman in Wagner's Der Fliegende Holländer. On the concert stage, he has worked with conductors Leonard Slatkin, John Nelson, Nicolas McGegan, Leon Botstein, and Dame Jane Glover.

Fleur Barron, mezzo-soprano (*Presenter, February 22*)

Singaporean-British, mezzo-soprano Fleur Barron is a passionate and sought-after interpreter of opera, chamber music, and concert works ranging from the baroque to the contemporary worldwide. She is a current Rising Star of Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and an Artistic Partner of the Orquesta Sinfonica del Principado de Asturias in Oviedo, curating and performing multiple projects. She is committed to using music to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and healing and regularly curates inclusive programming to amplify Asian creators and diverse communities.

Denise Ritter Bernardini, soprano (*Performer, February 22*)

Denise Ritter Bernardini is Associate Professor of Voice and Opera at the University of Radford in Radford, Virginia. Denise appears on the concert, musical theater, and opera stage in music of many periods. She is known for her ability to sing a variety of styles, brilliant high notes, pure tone, communicative warmth and musical intelligence. She has performed Internationally and throughout the US, with extensive Oratorio experience. In addition to being an active performer, Dr. Bernardini is also a sought-after clinician, teacher, presenter, and author. Denise and co-author Toni Crowder recently released the book "The Mindfulness of Singing."

Jean-Marc Betrix, violin (*Performer, February 22*)

Jean-Marc Betrix is a Swiss violinist, born in Lomé, Togo. He studied violin in Neuchatel with Y. Girardin, A. Bauer, P. Borer, and, in Canada, with G. Tardif. He helped develop jazz projects in Lausanne and worked in London for Deja-New Records, Black Diamonds/Atlantic Records (Warner), and Tileyard Music Education. In 2023, he toured with Gramm in large venues in France as the opening act for bands Deluxe and ALLTTA.

Mel Braun, baritone (*Performer, February 22*)

Mel Braun is a versatile baritone and music director, equally at home in opera, oratorio, recital, and choral music. He is well-known for his performances of Baroque and New Music, but especially loves the collaborative opportunities afforded by Art Song. His current project is a re-imagining of Schubert's Die Winterreise in collaboration with pop musician son Micah and poet daughter Madeleine, along with pianist Laura Loewen. When not teaching or directing opera ensembles at the Desautels Faculty of Music, he directs the Dead of Winter Ensemble, a choir dedicated to developing and premiering the new works of renowned Cree composer Andrew Balfour.

Caitlin Broms-Jacobs, oboe, and Madeline Hildebrand, piano (*Performers, February 23*)

Known for their joyful and electrifying performances, pianist Madeline Hildebrand and oboist Caitlin Broms-Jacobs have been fast friends and musical collaborators since 2014, when the duo performed their first concert together on Winnipeg's prestigious Millennium Recital Series. The pair is looking forward to the June 2024 release of their debut album on the Leaf Label, and to performances across Canada in 2024-2025.

Borealis Piano Trio (*Performers, February 23*)

Oleg Pokhanovski, Minna Rose Chung, and Judy Kehler Siebert, all music professors at the University of Manitoba, have performed together since 2008; their diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences always coalesce in an exciting chamber music collaboration. Known for adventurous programming, they will premiere a newly commissioned work by Winnipeg composer Syd Robinovitch in Spring 2024. The Trio has toured extensively in Canada, the US, and Europe, and will perform this summer at the Rio International Cello Encounter in Brazil.

Alex Chen, baritone, piano (*Presenter, February 22*)

Alex Chen is a collaborative pianist, baritone, and zoologically-trained nature lover. With an artistic practice that encompasses Baroque coloratura, misty Debussy piano passages, and advocacy for nature, he co-founded the Gay4Nature Collective to spearhead ecological and queer interpretations of classical music. Partnerships with BC Culture Days and Ocean Wise have further developed his outlets for sharing the special crossover between human music and the natural world. Supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, he is studying Chinese art song repertoire to better share the rich song tradition with the Chinese-Canadian community and beyond.

Jocelyn Dueck, piano (*Performer, February 23*)

Known for her captivating interpretations of new music, Jocelyn Dueck has accumulated great and diverse success in her career. An Assistant Professor of Collaborative Piano at Carnegie Mellon, Dr. Dueck is also a subject matter expert in prosody with Adobe and Readability Matters. Her interdisciplinary collaborations at CMU include projects with the Computer Engineering and Modern Languages departments. Dr. Dueck has served on the faculties of MSM, Juilliard, Bard, Tanglewood and Mannes, has prepared languages at the Metropolitan Opera, and been on the staff of Wolf Trap Opera since 2019.

Valerie Dueck, piano (*Performer, February 22*)

Valerie Dueck is an internationally active pianist who has distinguished herself as a solo and collaborative performer while living on three continents. She has been engaged by the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Grand Théâtre de Genève, Schlosstheater Schönbrunn in Vienna, Five Boroughs Music Festival in New York, and has been invited to perform in three successive tours of China. Her performances have been broadcast by the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Kazakh National Television.

Megan Duftrat, piano (*Performer, February 23*)

Having recently completed her Master of Music in Collaborative Piano at the Desautels Faculty of Music, Megan Duftrat is a freelance collaborative pianist and teacher based in Winnipeg. In

addition to her work as choral, vocal, and instrumental collaborator, Megan is a vocal coach and collaborative pianist at the Desautels Faculty of Music. Interested in the interdisciplinary connections between psychology and music, Megan is currently completing a degree in Psychology.

Robyn Driedger-Klassen, soprano (*Performer, February 24*)

Robyn Driedger-Klassen is known for her zeal for contemporary music. She performs and premieres many works by contemporary composers. She is Professor of Voice and Division Chair at the Vancouver Academy of Music where she teaches in their college program. She also owns and operates Robyn D Klassen Voice Studio, through which she gains immense satisfaction and joy working with advanced students of classical voice. She lives with her husband and two young vocal critics and is an expert at avoiding Lego underfoot.

DUO526 (*Performers, February 22, 23*)

KerryDuwors, violin; Futaba Niekawa, piano

“DuWors and Niekawa are a beautifully balanced duo” (Gramophone Magazine). Founded in 2011 at the Eastman School of Music, duo526 performs throughout Canada, the US, and Japan. Their creativity and innovation span street piano projects and social media recordings to collaborations in concert halls and residencies at the Banff Centre, Avaloch Farm Music Institute, and Leighton Artist Studios. "The personality of the two musicians expands out with a creative attitude towards the world" (Sonograma Magazine).

Duo Cantabile (*Performers, February 22*)

Formed in 2012 by international artists Simona Barbu (cello) and Nariaki Sugiura (piano), Duo Cantabile has performed globally. They've presented at esteemed institutions and concert halls in Germany, Hungary, Romania, China, Japan, Taiwan, Colombia, and the United States. Their repertoire often features newly commissioned works by American composers. In 2023, they established the Medora Music Academy, serving as artistic directors to enhance regional musical and educational offerings. Simona and Nariaki both teach at the University of North Dakota.

Minna Chung, cello (*Performer, February 22*)

Minna Rose Chung, Professor of Cello at University of Manitoba, is co-author of the internationally acclaimed *CelloMind: Intonation and Technique* and the upcoming *Ultimate Fun in Thumb Position*. Since 2008, Minna has been the director of Project Rio, a multi-collaborative program that supports string pedagogy through masterclasses and performances throughout Brazil. Dr. Chung is a recipient of multiple national awards in the creative field and featured in *Strad Magazine* “Teaching & Playing”, April 2018 issue.

Leslie Fagan, soprano (*Performer, February 23*)

From international stages, Leslie’s Poulenc Gloria at Carnegie Hall was hailed as “one of the most memorable performances of the season” by Opera News. Leslie is co-founder of the Canadian Art Song Series; “Thread of Winter” and “Halibut Cheeks and other Love Songs” are the first two CDs in the series. Leslie is Assistant Professor, Co-ordinator of Voice at Laurier University, and has recently been appointed to the Order of Ontario.

Gregory Feldmann, baritone (*Performer, February 22*)

Hailed for his "fresh and resonant voice" (Seen and Heard International), baritone Gregory Feldmann is a rising artist on opera and recital stages alike. He continues with the International Opera Studio with Opernhaus Zürich for the 2023–24 season. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Glimmerglass Festival, and the Musée d'Orsay. He is a graduate of the Artist Diploma in Opera Studies program at the Juilliard School.

Jayden Fraser, baritone (*Performer, February 24*)

Winnipeg baritone Jayden Fraser is currently in his third year of a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance at the University of Manitoba, studying with Mel Braun. Jayden is a versatile performer who enjoys performing art song, opera, oratorio, and musical theatre repertoire. Most recently, he was awarded runner up in the Zita Bernstein German Lieder Competition at the UofM. Recent credits include Steve in *The Reindeer King*, a new musical directed by Rob Herriot (2023) and The Dy'squith Family in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* with NUOVA Vocal Arts (2023). Jayden is looking forward to joining the ensemble for Manitoba Opera's production of *Carmen* in the spring.

Allison Gagnon, piano (*Performer, February 23, Presenter, February 24*)

Canadian pianist Allison Gagnon directs the Collaborative Piano Program at the UNC School of the Arts and concertizes with vocal and instrumental colleagues. Affiliated previously with Queen's and McGill Universities, she earned her DMA at CIM and the *Konzertdiplom* of the *Vienna Hochschule für Musik*. She serves as faculty mentor for *Music Between Us*, providing interactive music in dementia care. Creative interests include ceramics and nature photography.

Martha Guth, soprano (*Performer, February 22, 23*)

Juno and Latin Grammy nominated soprano Martha Guth's international highlights include Wigmore Hall, Lincoln Center, The National Cathedral, The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Philharmonic, and more. Recital partners include Graham Johnson and Erika Switzer. With Erika Switzer, she is co-founder/co-director of Sparks & Wiry Cries, a non-profit dedicated to publication, performance, and commission of art song. Martha is Assistant Professor of Voice at Ithaca College, and Co-Artistic Director at SongFest.

Joel Harder, piano (*Performer, February 23*)

Canadian Collaborative Pianist, Vocal Coach, Chamber Musician and Teacher.

Has performed at Alice Tully Hall, Caramoor Centre, Seiji Ozawa Hall, Bishopsgate Hall, and Carnegie Hall. Piano/Vocal staff at Cincinnati May Festival, Castleton Festival, Festival Lyrique Internationale de Belle-Ile en mer, Highlands Opera Studio, Chautauqua Opera Conservatory and Los Angeles Opera. Received Grad. Diploma from Guildhall (London) and DMA from The Juilliard School. Presser Award for thesis on Songs of Andre Caplet. Professor of Collaborative Piano at SUNY Binghamton, and Artistic Faculty at Manhattan School of Music.

Rebecca Hass, mezzo-soprano (*Performer, February 23*)

Rebecca Hass (Nitaawegiishigok) is Métis (Delaronde family) and lives her culture as a song carrier, storyteller and medicine maker. A glorious mezzo-soprano who has appeared with just about

every opera company and orchestra in Canada, Rebecca was the inaugural winner of the 2022 Nada Ristich Changemaker Ruby Award from Opera Canada. A passionate advocate of reclamation of ancestral voice, her artistic practice is land based and she makes her home on Lekwungen Territory in British Columbia.

Allen Harrington, saxophone (*Performer, February 23*)

Allen Harrington is a Professor at the University of Manitoba Desautels Faculty of Music where he is the chair of woodwinds and teaches saxophone and bassoon. He maintains a busy schedule outside his university teaching career as a soloist, orchestral and chamber musician, and adjudicator. With his duo partner Laura Loewen (piano), he has presented recitals across Canada, the United States, Europe, Asia, and South America.

Monica Huisman, soprano (*Performer, February 24*)

Dutch Canadian Lyric Soprano Monica Huisman has delighted opera and concert audiences from Amsterdam's Concertgebouw to Guatemala City to Rio de Janeiro with her 'silken' voice 'consistently crafting each note into a work of art' (Winnipeg Free Press). In demand as a teacher and clinician, Ms. Huisman is on the Voice Faculty at the Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba, has been a guest teacher with every major university across Canada, and is on the faculty for young artists training programs across the country.

Helen Zhibing Huang, soprano (*Presenter, February 22*)

Helen Zhibing Huang is a Chinese-born soprano and was recently described as "impressive" (The New York Times) after her portrayal of Pamina in The Magic Flute for The Glimmerglass Festival. She has performed on the operatic, concert, and recital stages with organizations such as Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, The Glimmerglass Festival, Portland Opera, Kentucky Opera, Washington Concert Opera, North Carolina Opera, Nashville Opera, Annapolis Opera, Central City Opera, Naples Philharmonic, American Symphony, and Alabama Symphony Orchestra. She is a co-founder of Wear Yellow Proudly. In her spare time, Miss Huang enjoys cooking and eating traditional Chinese dishes.

Aaron Hutton, tenor (*Performer, February 23*)

Award-winning tenor Aaron Hutton is a versatile performer with a resume ranging from Baroque to contemporary opera. Recognized as "a golden tenor" and "a shining star displaying supreme confidence", he continues to make a name for himself as a sought-after vocalist. Aaron has performed with Manitoba Theatre Centre, Manitoba Opera, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Aaron obtained his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Manitoba and is an alumnus of the Banff Centre.

Christopher Kayler, piano (*Performer, February 22*)

Canadian pianist Christopher Kayler is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after collaborators in the Prairies. He is currently an assistant professor of music at Briercrest College. He received his DMA in Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music from the Eastman School of Music and was appointed Principal Keyboard of the Regina Symphony Orchestra in 2020. He has performed across Canada as well as in the United States and Europe.

Judy Kehler Siebert, piano (*Presenter, February 22, 24, Performer, February 22*)

Judy has connected powerfully with listeners in European concert halls, rural school gyms, Bosnian galleries, and venues from Lithuania to Mexico and Brazil to Alaska as a solo pianist and chamber musician. Her passion is to communicate the many languages of music, and to spark a connection with others. She performs and tours most frequently with the Borealis Piano Trio, with Minna Chung (Nacka Duo), and in ensembles locally and internationally. A Professor of Collaborative Piano at the University of Manitoba, Judy is tireless in her efforts to support, nurture, and encourage the next generation of pianists.

Lindsay Kesselman, soprano (*Performer, February 23*)

Lindsay Kesselman is a two-time GRAMMY-nominated soprano known for her warm, collaborative spirit and investment in personal, intimate communication with audiences. She regularly collaborates with orchestras, wind symphonies, chamber ensembles, opera/theater companies, and new music ensembles across the United States, often premiering, touring and recording new works written for her by living composers. She is a passionate advocate for contemporary music and has commissioned/premiered over 100 works to date.

Laura Loewen, piano (*Presenter, February 22, 24, Performer, February 22, 23*)

Praised for expressivity, virtuosity, and committed playing, Canadian collaborative pianist Laura Loewen is an extremely versatile pianist equally versed in traditional and contemporary idioms. Dedicated to sharing her passion for ensemble playing and coaching, she is Professor of Collaborative Piano and the Vocal Coach at the University of Manitoba's Desautels Faculty of Music and was appointed to the position of Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programs) in 2020.

Danna McDonald (*Presenter, February 22*)

Danna McDonald is a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist and a Counsellor at the University of Manitoba. She is honoured to be the embedded counsellor in the Desautels Faculty of Music, which allows her to work with music students in their personal, educational and musical journeys. Some of her areas of expertise include eating disorders and body image, self-compassion, trauma and emotion work. She enjoys being outdoors, volunteering in the community, and spending time with friends, family and her two dogs, who keep her life both messy and full of love.

Katherine Mayba (*Performer, February 23*)

Winnipeg soprano Katherine Mayba has been hailed as a "multi-talented, charismatic [and]riveting" performer (Opera Canada). A multidisciplinary musician, Katherine holds her ARCT Performance Diploma in Voice, Piano and Violin from The Royal Conservatory of Music and is obtaining her Master of Music in Voice at the University of Manitoba. Katherine is a member of the Ukrainian Art Song Project and is invested in promoting Ukrainian art songs in recitals and recording projects.

André Micheletti, cello (*Performer, February 23, 24*)

Brazilian cellist André Micheletti holds a double DMA degree from Indiana University and a M. Mus degree from Northwestern University Bienen School of Music. Andre is an active soloist and chamber musician, appearing with several distinguished orchestras in Brazil and throughout

North America. As a founding member of the Micheletti Trio, he has had the pleasure of performing in concert as part of the 2012 Virtuosi Series in Winnipeg. Currently, Dr. André Micheletti is Professor of Cello and Chamber Music at the University of São Paulo (USP), in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil.

Alexandra Nguyen, piano (*Performer, February 22, 24*)

A native of Montréal, Alexandra Nguyen maintains a diverse career as a pianist, teacher, and administrator. She has performed throughout the United States and Canada, with recent performances in Italy, Spain, and Malaysia, at venues such as Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall (NYC) and the Teatro Nacional (Panama City). A sought-after collaborator, she has shared the stage with such artists as the Takács Quartet and bassoonist Peter Kolkay. Dr. Nguyen co-directs the graduate programs in collaborative piano at the University of Colorado Boulder and chairs the Collaborative Performance Committee for the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy.

Hannah Orr, soprano (*Performer, February 24*)

Hannah Orr is a soprano studying under Monica Huisman at the University of Manitoba, in her third year of a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance. Originally from Magrath, Alberta, Hannah has always enjoyed sharing her love of music. Hannah recently won the Desautels Faculty of Music's Zita Bernstein German Lieder competition. Her most recent role is La Grande-Prêtresse in Rameau's Hippolyte et Aricie in an excerpt presented by the University's Opera Theatre Ensemble.

Elation Pauls, violin (*Performer, February 22*)

Violinist Elation Pauls is Artistic Director of the Rosamunde Summer Music Academy and Festival and has served as Assistant Principal Second Violin with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra since 2009. In 2023 the Canada Council for the Arts awarded her a grant to commission and record new Canadian works for violin and piano and her debut album, *SUSTENANCE*, will be released this fall. Visit violinelation.com for more details.

Juliet Petrus, soprano (*Presenter, February 22, Performer, February 23*)

Coloratura Soprano, Author, Educator, Researcher, Librettist

Soprano soloist with Philadelphia, St Louis, Shanghai, Chengdu, New York City Opera Festival Orchestras; Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Walt Disney Hall, National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing. Frequent Carmina Burana soloist and Queen of the Night. Co-Author (Katherine Chu) *Singing in Mandarin: A Guide to Chinese Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2020); Album *A Great Distance* with Lydia Qiu (MSR Classics, 2015); co-librettist (Kameron Locke): *Tuskegee*, music by William Garfield Walker. PhD Candidate, Royal College of Music, London, UK.

Leanne Regehr, piano (*Performer, February 23*)

Leanne Regehr is a versatile and sensitive pianist who is recognized for her intuitive ability to collaborate with other musicians across an extensive range of repertoire. She holds a Doctor of Music in Piano Performance from Northwestern University and is based in Edmonton, Alberta,

where she is a keyboardist with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, on faculty at The King's University, and active as a soloist, chamber musician, vocal coach and adjudicator.

Lisa Rumpel, piano (*Performer, February 23*)

Praised for her "fierce artistry" and "poetic" pianism, Winnipeg-based "powerhouse" pianist and vocal coach Lisa Rumpel is an active member of Manitoba's arts scene. Lisa's vibrant and varied freelance career has included performances with many of Manitoba's leading arts organizations and musicians since obtaining her Master of Music (Collaborative Piano) at the University of Manitoba in 2015. Lisa is an alumna of the Franz Schubert Institut, Vancouver International Song Institute, Opera NUOVA, and Brandon University.

Alyssa Ryvers, composer (*Presenter, February 23*)

Alyssa Ryvers is a contemporary composer who creates interdisciplinary works in the classical music tradition. Alyssa's collaboration with the Duplessis Orphans began in 2013, as an artistic response to learning that the shock treatments her mother underwent as a young woman in Montréal—aimed to erase the memory of her childhood—occurred within a larger context of systemic psychiatric medical abuses taking place in Quebec during that same period.

Hervé Bertrand, a Duplessis Orphan, leader, lifelong activist and champion for the cause, learned the harmonica in hiding at Mont Providence, where he and other children used music as an escape. Now in his 80's, Hervé views his ongoing collaboration with Alyssa as a vehicle in his quest for justice. In 2012, Mr. Bertrand was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, for exceptional service to his fellows.

Fraser Rubens, tenor (*Performer, February 24*)

Fraser Rubens has performed with Opera Lyra Ottawa, Co-Opera Canada, and the Southminster Festival. The Canadian composer Peter Wilshire dedicated the song series "Three Songs for the Heart", for tenor and orchestra, to Fraser in 2005. In the last several years, Fraser formed Concert Docs with pianist Dr. Carol Wiebe to provide music for the elderly. Dr. Rubens is a Professor of Surgery at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, and his musical charity work was featured in "The Surgeons" on the Discovery Channel.

Karen Santos, soprano (*Performer, February 23*)

Karen Santos is a soprano and visual artist, born and raised in Mexico City, who recently graduated with a Masters degree from the Desautels Faculty of Music. Karen regularly collaborates with pianist Megan Dufprat, and in fact, she and Megan participated in the inaugural Dream Big conference in 2020. You can find Karen performing with local opera companies or producing her own works around Manitoba.

Erika Switzer, piano (*Performer, February 22, 23, 24*)

Pianist Erika Switzer, whose performances have been called "precise and lucid" (New York Times), and "intelligent, refined, and captivating" (Le Monde), collaborates internationally with singers and instrumentalists of her generation. Switzer is co-founder of the organization Sparks & Wiry Cries, which promotes the advancement and preservation of art song. She serves on the music

faculty and directs the Collaborative Piano Fellowship at Bard College and holds a doctorate from The Juilliard School.

Guillaume Tardif, violin (*Performer, February 22*)

Guillaume Tardif is a Canadian violinist, faculty member and String Area Coordinator at the Department of Music, University of Alberta. He completed studies at the Conservatoire du Quebec and the Eastman School of Music (notably, under the guidance of Prof. Jean Barr), and has toured and recorded extensively with Prof. Judy Kehler Siebert.

Viðarneisti (*Performers, February 23*)

Viðarneisti is the collaboration between Cathy Wood and Victoria Sparks. Their name is Icelandic for “wood-spark”: a pun on their last names and nod to their shared Icelandic heritage. Viðarneisti is symbolic of a match that ignites the spark of new ideas. The duo presented at the 2019 MusCan and the 2021 Association for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies conferences, the 2018 ICA ClarinetFest in Belgium, and the 2021 Nordic Music Days in the Faroe Islands have commissioned works by Fjóla Evans, Kenley Kristofferson, Chris Byman, and Karen Sunabacka. Viðarneisti is supported by Prairie Debut.

Anica Warkentine, piano (*Performer, February 24*)

Anica Warkentine is a Winnipeg-born pianist currently studying collaborative piano at the University of Manitoba. As a soloist, she has been featured with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and the University of Manitoba Symphony Orchestra. In 2022, she won the University of Manitoba Lawrence Genser Award, the Annual Concerto Competition, and the Aikin’s Trophy. As a chamber musician, she has appeared with Virtuosi concerts and in the ReSound series with the Winnipeg Chamber Winds Collective.

McKenzie Warriner, soprano, and Danielle Guina, piano (*Performers, February 23*)

Acclaimed for their sensitive ensemble and fearless exploration of lesser-known repertoire, soprano McKenzie Warriner and pianist Danielle Guina have performed across Canada and the United States. Although they were both raised on farms in Saskatchewan, their collaboration began during graduate studies at the Eastman School of Music. Most recently, Warriner and Guina performed a nine-city recital tour of contemporary works as winners of the 2023 Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition.

Carol Wiebe, piano (*Performer and Presenter, February 24*)

As a family physician, chamber musician, and former hospital executive, Dr. Carol Wiebe uses her broad training and experience to design opportunities and spaces where people can find meaning and heal. Carol studied music performance (piano, flute) before becoming a family physician and continues to enjoy performing.

Dr. Mei Zhong, soprano (*Presenter, February 22*)

Professor of Voice, Ball State University, Indiana, USA. As an opera singer and concert soloist, and recitalist, Dr. Zhong has performed extensively in China and the United States. Her articles, books and scores of Chinese art song, and recordings have been published, several of which have been

reviewed by NATS Journal of Singing. An active teacher, singer and scholar, Dr. Zhong has given many master classes, lecture recitals and presentations at institutions, festivals, and over fifty conferences worldwide. Dr. Zhong was the recipient of many awards and grants including a fellowship for studying in the National Association of Teachers of Singing Intern Program.

Jialiang Zhu, piano (*Presenter, February 22, Performer, February 23*)

Pianist Jialiang Zhu is the co-founder of the Bedford Trio. She actively curates concert series and performs globally with diverse artists. She specializes in Chinese art song and has appeared in recordings, recitals, and music festivals. Currently pursuing a Doctoral of Musical Arts (DMA) at the University of Toronto (U of T), she was a featured soloist with York Chamber Ensemble and U of T Symphony Orchestra and is a winner of the DMA recital competition.