



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
School of Music

UBC OPERA

2024 - 2025
SEASON

Welcome to UBC Opera



I am delighted to bring you this overview of the UBC Opera Ensemble's exciting 2024 - 2025 season!

Our season starts on October 4 with a trip on a ship - the **H.M.S. Pinafore**! Join Captain Corcoran on his jolly ship for Gilbert and Sullivan's first blockbuster hit. This hilarious tale of love, honour and duty will have you tapping your toes and singing along. We are thrilled to welcome back conductor **Leslie Dala** and members of the **Vancouver Opera Orchestra** to open our season at the Old Auditorium. Join us for a preview of

H.M.S. Pinafore on September 22 at our first **Opera Tea** of the season at the beautiful UBC Botanical Gardens.

This season will mark the return of our popular series **Singer Behind the Song**, presented in collaboration with **Opera West Society** who have generously engaged internationally acclaimed tenor **Javier Camarena** to present a recital and masterclass on October 3 in the Old Auditorium. This is an event you won't want to miss!

On October 27, our **Opera Tea** will include excerpts of our production of **Kurt Weill's** "American Broadway Opera" **Street Scene** along with other popular operatic hits. We will present Weill's masterpiece in the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts from January 30 to February 2, 2025. The piece is a wonderful blend of opera, jazz, blues, show tunes, musical theatre and dance numbers depicting the lives of multi-ethnic working class and immigrant inhabitants of a crowded brownstone in New York City. Pre-show talks will highlight the lives and works of **Kurt Weill** and librettist, social activist and American writer, **Langston Hughes**.

For the season, we will present a **Holiday Concert** of operatic and operetta excerpts topped off with festive favourites on November 23 in the Old Auditorium. Join the party, sing along and tap your toes to the tunes you know and love!

As springtime approaches, we will present an **Opera Tea** on March 2 in the Old Auditorium with opera favourites extolling the virtues of spring and excerpts from **Manon**.

Manon is believed to be Massenet's most famous opera. After its premiere in 1884, it became a mainstay of the Opéra-Comique in Paris. We are delighted to welcome **Jacques Lacombe** and the **Vancouver Opera Orchestra** back to work with UBC Opera. A collaboration with **Opera West Society**, **Manon** features two guest stars; international Metropolitan Opera star making her Canadian debut **Emily Pogorelc** as Manon; and internationally acclaimed Canadian tenor **Frédéric Antoun** as the hero Des Grieux.

April 6 will close our season with an **Opera Tea** at the UBC Botanical Gardens before we part for the summer. Due to rising production and artistic costs, we are having to raise our ticket prices for the first time since before the pandemic. We thank you for your understanding and hope you will continue to support our talented opera students.

Join us for an exciting season featuring celebrated guests, our incredible production team, amazing conductors and orchestras, and most of all, our wonderful UBC Opera Ensemble!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Hermiston". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" and last name "Hermiston" clearly legible.

Nancy Hermiston, O.C.
Head, Voice and Opera Division



H.M.S. Pinafore

Comic Opera in Two Acts
Sung in English with English Surtitles

Arthur Sullivan | *Composer*
W. S. Gilbert | *Librettist*

October 4 & 5, 7:30PM, October 5 & 6, 2PM
Old Auditorium

H.M.S. Pinafore, the fourth collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan, is a hilarious tale of love, honor, and duty. As Gilbert and Sullivan's first blockbuster hit, it remains one of their most popular operas thanks to its infectious tunes and well-constructed libretto, which draws on several of Gilbert's earlier "Bab Ballad" poems. The opera's gentle satire builds upon a theme from the opera *The Sorcerer*.

The story follows Ralph Rackstraw, a lowly sailor, and Josephine, the Captain's daughter, who is secretly in love with Ralph. Her sense of duty to her father, who desires her to wed the elderly Right Honourable Sir Joseph Porter, prevents her from even letting her feelings be known. The Captain is also enamored by the peddler-woman Buttercup who adores him but sadly, is of a lower rank. Sir Joseph arrives with his entourage of ladies and explains how he became the Lord of the Admiralty. He encourages the sailors to feel that they are everyone's equal - except his. This gives Ralph the courage to profess his love to Josephine. After a short resistance, Josephine agrees to elope with him that very evening.

The Second Act finds Captain Corcoran in despair at the demoralization of his crew and his daughter's coldness to Sir Joseph. Buttercup, overhearing his despair, comes to his aid. Sir Joseph enters the scene indignant that Josephine is not responsive to his proposal. The Captain suggests that it is because of his exalted rank. When Sir Joseph explains that rank should not be considered a barrier to marriage Josephine is delighted. The lovers plan to elope, assisted by the crew. Warned by Dick Deadeye, the Captain intercepts the elopers and is so incensed by this outrage he cries "Damne!" Sir Joseph is scandalized by the Captain's swearing but when he learns of the attempted elopement, he has Ralph put in chains. Buttercup must reveal her secret. When she was a nurse, she inadvertently mixed up the two babies in her care and reveals the one who should be Ralph is really the Captain, and the one who is the Captain is in fact Ralph. The Captain is now a lowly sailor, but now he is free to marry his beloved Buttercup. Josephine can now wed Ralph, leaving Sir Joseph with no one! Cousin Hebe rushes forward offering herself to him and he resigns himself to his plight declaring that all three pairs shall be united!

Leslie Dala | *Conductor*
Nancy Hermiston | *Director*
Members of the **Vancouver Opera Orchestra**



Street Scene

Opera in Two Acts

Sung in English with English Surtitles

Kurt Weill | *Composer*

Langston Hughes | *Librettist*

Book by **Elmer Rice**, based on the play of the same name.

January 30, 31 & February 1, 7:30PM | February 2, 2PM

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

Kurt Weill's beautiful two-act "American Broadway Opera" *Street Scene* blends operatic arias and ensembles, show tunes and dance numbers, jazz and blues, creating an emotionally charged portrait of family and communal life among the multi-ethnic working-class and immigrants living in a crowded brownstone in New York City. The action is centered on the life-changing events of two oppressively hot summer days. *Street Scene* illuminates the tensions, despair, hopes and dreams of this community.

Anna Maurrant, trapped in an unhappy marriage with her volatile and violent husband Frank, has found some solace in an affair with Steve Sankey. The gossips in the building spread the rumours about Anna's betrayal of her husband. Rose, Anna's daughter, is pursued by her boss, a married man. The gossips also spread stories about her, saying she is exactly like her mother. Rose resists her boss' persistent attentions as her heart belongs to her neighbour, Sam, the aspiring young law student. Sam is in love with her as well and sings of his loneliness despite living amongst all of these people. Sam and Rose confess their love to each other and resolve to leave the street and have a better life together. Rose leaves and Sam muses about their future. Mr. Sankey, Anna's lover, comes by and quickly goes up to the apartment. Sam, aware of the affair sits nervously on the front steps. Suddenly, Frank, Anna's husband, returns and after seeing Sam's panicked reaction, he runs up to the apartment, killing the lover and drastically wounding his wife. Chaos ensues and Frank escapes. Rose returns to find her wounded mother being taken away. The next day, Rose learns of her mother's death and that her father was captured and taken to jail. The hateful gossip continues in the building tormenting Rose who is feeling lost and unworthy of her beloved Sam. She fears she will destroy his life. With great sadness, Rose tells Sam that she is not worthy of him and must leave. Sam is utterly devastated. The gossips observe it all and life continues on the street.

With its rich musical variety and emotionally charged narrative, *Street Scene* offers an unforgettable glimpse into the dreams, tensions, and hopes of its characters.

Jonathan Girard | *Conductor*

Nancy Hermiston | *Director*

Members of the **UBC Symphony Orchestra**



Manon

Ópera-Comique in Five Acts
Sung in French with English Surtitles

Jules Massenet | *Composer*
Henri Meilhac & Philippe Gille | *Librettists*

March 28, 7:30PM & March 30, 2PM
Old Auditorium

Emily Pogorelc | *Manon*
Frédéric Antoun | *Des Grieux*
In collaboration with **Opera West Society**.

Manon is thought to be Jules Massenet's most famous opera. It includes many different styles of music both lyrical and melodramatic. First performed in Paris in 1884, it is a fine example of French Romanticism and immediately became an opera mainstay at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. After its premiere, it reached its 1000th performance in 1919, its 1500th performance in 1931, and 2000th in 1952. The music is a quintessential example of Parisian charm and culture, with the role of Manon having been performed by many famous sopranos such as Anna Moffo, Beverly Sills, Edita Gruberova and Renée Fleming. Due to its heavy vocal demands, the role of Manon was described by Sills as "the French Isolde".

The opera begins with the Chevalier des Grieux, who meets and falls passionately in love with Manon Lescaut, an innocent but lively young lady. Her cousin, Lescaut has been charged with bringing her safely to a convent for her schooling. It is love at first sight for Manon as well and she and the young cavalier des Grieux swiftly agree to elope. Des Grieux's father intervenes to part the two young lovers, through an alliance with Lescaut and the wealthy nobleman de Bretigny. De Bretigny warns Manon that her lover's father will have him kidnapped to bring him home, and she will be left alone to fend for herself. He convinces her that she must leave des Grieux, as much for the young des Grieux's sake as for her own. She submits to the overtures of de Bretigny. Heartbroken, des Grieux retreats to a monastic life until their ill-fated reunion finally leads them into a dissipated lifestyle of gambling and prostitution, and ultimately to Manon's downfall and death.

Jacques Lacombe | *Conductor*
Nancy Hermiston | *Director*
Members of the **Vancouver Opera Orchestra**



Opera Teas

September 22 & April 6 | 2PM, UBC Botanical Gardens
October 27 & March 2 | 2PM, Old Auditorium

Opera Teas bring you closer to the performers onstage. Enjoy a concert of opera arias and song favourites in the casual settings of the Old Auditorium and UBC Botanical Gardens. September and October will feature previews of our presentations of **H.M.S. Pinafore** and **Street Scene**. Join us in March for music celebrating spring with excerpts from **Manon**. In April, our Opera students will perform a program of opera favourites to end the season. Coffee, tea and light refreshments will be served. It will be a varied feast of opera and operetta repertoire.

Singer Behind the Song

In collaboration with **Opera West Society**.

October 3 | 6PM, Old Auditorium

In collaboration with **Opera West Society**, we are delighted to present this audience favourite, **Singer Behind the Song**. From the historic Old Auditorium, we are excited to present one of the world's greatest tenors, **Javier Camarena**, "King of the high C's." This Mexican tenor has performed in every major opera house in the world. In 2011, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and since has become the third singer to sing an encore on the Met stage in seventy years. He is also the second singer to sing multiple encores at the Met. He is known as a tenor with a rich, warm timbre, extraordinarily thrilling high notes and an astoundingly beautiful voice. In this rare event you will experience, a stunning performance from this international star, and an interview where you will get to know the person—as well as the singer. Camarena will also host a masterclass with our UBC Opera students. You do not want to miss this once in a lifetime event in a theatre of only 525 seats. Get your tickets now!



Holiday Concert

November 23 | 7:30PM, Old Auditorium

Join us in celebrating the end of first term with a special gift!

This concert will present you with a beautiful bouquet of your favourite opera, operetta and musical theatre songs, bringing us into the winter holidays and, can you believe it, 2025! Join the party to sing along and tap your toes to the tunes you know and love. It's a celebration of you, our supporters; and our exceptional UBC Opera Ensemble.

Support Us

Helping students create a better future!

The support we receive from audience members and donors help us present fully-staged productions with orchestra, as well as fund scholarships and collaborations with professional conductors, coaches, and singers—providing a rich experiential education for our students. Graduates from the UBC Opera program continue on to sing, act and teach all over the world.

I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to our audience members and donors who have supported us throughout the years. Each subscription, ticket, and donation empowers our students to make a positive impact in their careers and communities.

If you are able to, please give to the “UBC Opera Trust” by visiting **give.ubc.ca/opera-fund** or scanning the QR code below. Change the world through the power of the arts!

With warmest thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Hermiston". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name "Hermiston".

Nancy Hermiston, O.C.
Head, Voice and Opera Division



Tickets & Subscriptions

Bundle packages open for past subscribers starting **July, 16 2024** at noon. New bundle purchases open August 7 at noon and single tickets go on sale September 3 at noon.

Buy tickets online at **ubcoperatickets.com**, or by phone at **604.822.2697**.

UBC OPERA

	MAIN OPERAS		OPERA TEAS		HOLIDAY CONCERT
	Single	Bundle* (2 Operas)	Single	Subscription (4 Opera Teas)	Single
ADULT	\$50	\$80	\$31	\$100	\$31
SENIOR	\$40	\$64	\$26	\$84	\$26
UNDER 30	\$40	\$64	\$26	\$84	\$26
STUDENT/ YOUTH	\$25	\$40	\$18	\$58	\$18

*Main opera bundle includes **H.M.S. Pinafore** & **Street Scene** only.

UBC OPERA IN COLLABORATION WITH OPERA WEST SOCIETY

Manon and *Singer Behind the Song* featuring Javier Camarena will be produced in collaboration with UBC Opera and Opera West Society. UBC Opera Bundle holders will receive early access (*sales starting on July 16*) and a discount of 25% off select seats to all events that are in collaboration with Opera West Society. Ticket sales to the general public will open on August 7 at noon.

MANON			SINGER BEHIND THE SONG		
Single Zoned Pricing		UBC Opera Bundle Subscribers	Single		UBC Opera Bundle Subscribers
ZONE A	\$100	25% OFF	ADULT	\$70	25% OFF
ZONE B	\$80	25% OFF	STUDENT	\$30	N/A
ZONE C	\$60	N/A			

BRING YOUR GROUP

Bring your group or class for a memorable and affordable opera experience. Group rates are available for groups of 10 or more and school groups. Visit **ubcoperatickets.com**, or by phone at **604.822.2697** for more information.

UBC OPERA

UBC School of Music
6361 Memorial Road
Vancouver, BC
V6T 1Z2

CONNECT WITH UBC OPERA

music.ubc.ca
facebook.com/ubcopera
IG: @ubcopera

BOX OFFICE

ubcoperatickets.com
604.822.2697
chan.tickets@ubc.ca



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
School of Music



PHOTOS: Back cover: Tim Matheson
Design: Andrea Hernandez Hasselkus