



UBC Opera

presents

Le nozze di Figaro

Sung in Italian with English surtitles

Comic Opera in Four Acts

Music by **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** | Libretto by **Lorenzo da Ponte**

Recorded May 20 and 21, 2021 at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

Conductor – **David Agler**

Director – **Nancy Hermiston**

Lighting Design – **Jeremy Baxter**

Technical Director – **Grant Windsor**

Costume Design – **Parvin Mirhady**

UBC Opera Ensemble

Pianist – **Tina Chang**

**This production is made possible by the
David Spencer Endowment Encouragement Fund**

*We acknowledge that the University of British Columbia is situated on the
traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.*



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



UBC THEATRE & FILM

The Making of Figaro



Welcome to all of you, and I hope you are keeping safe and healthy during these exceptional times.

The Marriage of Figaro is a seminal work for every student or professional singer. The rehearsal process is a very gradual, involved process ending with the Piano Dress rehearsals, which come immediately before the penultimate stage of the production - the final rehearsals with the orchestra.

Those orchestra rehearsals will take place next January, before we present the whole show with orchestra at the Chan Centre with six performances between January 30 and February 6.

We offer you two dress rehearsals for your viewing pleasure, plus a documentary about the '**Making of Figaro**'. You will see singers acting on the set in their costumes and wigs, singing and acting their roles as if it were a performance with all of **you** in the audience and all of the enthusiastic energy that such a wonderful opera demands.

In this accompanying documentary, we introduce you to many of the people and places behind the scenes, as well as give you insight into the complicated production and artistic world of opera that is so crucial to the multi-faceted educational journey of the opera singer.

I hope you enjoy this peek behind the curtain.

All the very best for an enjoyable summer, and we look forward to welcoming you to our performances very soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Hermiston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Hermiston, O.C.

Support UBC Opera

The Cast

	MAY 20	MAY 21
<i>Figaro</i>	Matthew McLellan	Philip Wing
<i>Susanna</i>	Emma Petersen Melland	Magdalena How
<i>Bartolo</i>	Liam Robertson	Rafael Laurindo
<i>Marcellina</i>	Alyssa Samson	Mara Ayque
<i>Cherubino</i>	Taryn Plater	Katie Fraser
<i>Count Almaviva</i>	Matthew Kim	Connor Hoppenbrouwers
<i>Basilio</i>	Dae Hyun Justin Cho	Jackson Allen
<i>Countess Rosina Almaviva</i>	Leila Kirves	Catherine Thornsley
<i>Antonio</i>	Max Smith	Hans Grunwald
<i>Barbarina</i>	Emma Jang	Hannah Ernst
<i>Don Curzio</i>	Gabriel Chona Rueda	Ming-Xuan Chung
<i>Village Girls</i>	Clara Wiens Julia Coutant	Julia Johnstone Neusha Amir-Rahmani*

The Chorus

Soprano: Erika Pryer, Clara Wiens

Mezzo: Neusha Amir-Rahmani*, Julia Coutant, Julia Johnstone

Tenor: Gabriel Chona Rueda, Ming-Xuan Chung

Baritone: Hans Grunwald, Max Smith

**unable to perform due to an injury*

Synopsis

ACT ONE

Figaro (Count Almaviva's valet) and Susanna (Countess Almaviva's maid) are preparing for their impending wedding. Upon learning that the Count intends for the newlyweds to live in the room adjacent to his own, Susanna reveals to Figaro that the Count plans to reinstate his "droit du seigneur" to sleep with her on her wedding night. The Countess calls for Susanna, leaving Figaro alone as he vows to outwit the Count.

After Figaro departs to devise a plan, Dr. Bartolo enters with the housekeeper, Marcellina. She has hired Bartolo to be her lawyer in a bid to marry Figaro herself as repayment for his financial debts, despite the fact she is easily twice his age. Bartolo is happy to oblige, as he is seeking revenge against Figaro for having facilitated the union between the Count and Countess Rosina (who was once Bartolo's ward and whom he desired to marry himself).

Susanna returns and exchanges veiled insults with Marcellina, who leaves in a huff. Shortly after, the amorous page Cherubino enters in a tizzy: the Count caught him in a compromising position with Barbarina, the gardener's daughter, and plans to punish him for his transgressions. Cherubino quickly hides as the Count approaches. Unaware of Cherubino's presence, the Count attempts to seduce Susanna, but he too is forced to hide when the music master, Don Basilio, arrives. When the gossiping Basilio suggests that Cherubino is in love with the Countess, the Count angrily emerges, becoming further enraged by discovering the concealed Cherubino.

Just then, Figaro bursts in with a bevy of peasants who sing their praises to their "enlightened" leader for his decision to abolish his feudal right, the medieval droit du seigneur. Forced to abandon his original plan, the Count instead punishes Cherubino by assigning him to his regiment in Seville. Figaro playfully extolls the glory of military life: a life devoid of all luxury, away from all women.

ACT TWO

In her boudoir, the Countess laments her husband's waning love. Figaro and Susanna remind her that all hope is not lost, and Figaro explains his plan to show the Count the error of his ways: they will send Cherubino, disguised as Susanna, to a romantic assignation with the Count. Cherubino arrives, and the women begin to dress the page for his farcical rendezvous, but not before having him perform the song he wrote for the Countess.

Whilst Susanna is out searching for a ribbon, the Count arrives at the door and is shocked to find it locked. Cherubino swiftly hides in the closet. The Countess unlocks the door and, after noise from the closet raises his suspicions, tells the Count that

it is merely Susanna inside. Sceptical of her story, the Count takes his wife to fetch some tools with which to force open the closet door, locking Susanna (who has been observing all this from behind a screen) and Cherubino inside the Countess' chambers. In desperation, Cherubino jumps out the window to escape, and Susanna takes his place in the closet. The women manage to convince the Count it was Susanna inside all along that they were simply playing a trick on him, and Figaro runs in to announce that all is ready for their wedding.

All seems well until the gardener, Antonio, storms in with a handful of crushed flowers he found underneath the window. To allay the Count's suspicions, Figaro claims it was he who jumped from the window, feigning an injured ankle. With some help from Susanna and the Countess, he is even able to identify the document Antonio picked up: Cherubino's commission, missing its seal. Just when things appear to be under control, Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio burst into the room with a court summons for Figaro. This delights the Count as it gives him an excuse to delay the wedding. The Count, Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio, revel in their victory as confusion and dismay swamp Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess.

— *Intermission* —

ACT THREE

The Count mulls over all the confusion that has taken place. At the urging of the Countess (as part of a larger scheme to expose the Count's infidelities), Susanna proposes a rendezvous with the Count in the garden, to his delight. However, the Count overhears Susanna conspiring with Figaro and realizes their plot. He resolves to prevent the marriage from happening so he can have Susanna for himself.

Figaro's hearing follows, and the Count judges that Figaro must marry Marcellina. Don Curzio's lawyer rules this to be the only option as Figaro doesn't have the money to pay his debt to Marcellina. Figaro protests this, saying he needs the blessing of his noble parents, whom he never met as he was abducted from them as a baby. He shows off a birthmark on his right arm, saying that it will prove his noble heritage one day. Marcellina is in shock upon seeing the birthmark, as she suddenly realizes that Figaro is actually her long lost son Raffaello. When she reveals that Bartolo is Figaro's father, a tearful reconciliation occurs. When Susanna enters and sees Figaro rejoicing with Marcellina, she is enraged but is soon informed that Marcellina is not her rival but her future mother-in-law. She joins the celebration, and Bartolo agrees to marry Marcellina that evening in a double wedding.

Once everyone has left, Barbarina invites Cherubino back to her house. To prevent the Count from discovering him, Barbarina decides to dress Cherubino up like a girl. In a quiet moment, the Countess laments her memories of the Count she once knew but ultimately resolves to hope that her constancy will bring him back to her. Susanna enters, and the Countess' spirits are revived as they write a letter to the Count

confirming Susanna's liaison with him that night. The letter is sealed with a pin, which the letter instructs the Count to return to Susanna.

Among them, Cherubino in disguise, a group of peasant girls arrive to offer flowers to the Countess. Antonio recognizes Cherubino and angrily calls him out. The Count is furious and is about to punish him when Barbarina steps in and reminds the Count that he offered to give her anything she wanted (in between his kisses and caresses). Thoroughly embarrassed, he allows Cherubino to stay - provided he marries Barbarina.

The act closes with the double wedding. Figaro observes the Count pricking his finger on the pin during the dancing as he tries to open and read Susanna's letter.

ACT FOUR

Following the directions in the letter, the Count has tasked Barbarina to return the pin to Susanna. Barbarina laments that she cannot find the pin in the darkness. When Figaro and Marcellina come through the gardens, Barbarina tells them of the missing pin, raising Figaro's suspicions, as he is unaware of the plot hatched by Susanna and the Countess. Devastated and jealous, Figaro denounces all women for their treachery. Susanna and the Countess enter, ready to embark on their masquerade, and Marcellina warns them that Figaro has come to observe secretly. When the Countess leaves, Susanna rhapsodizes about her love for Figaro, but he, overhearing, thinks she means the Count.

The Countess and Susanna exchange cloaks as Cherubino arrives and teases the Countess, thinking that she is Susanna. The Count suddenly appears and chases him away. Overjoyed that he is finally alone with "Susanna", he gives her a ring as a pledge of his devotion, and the Countess leads him off into the trees. Figaro emerges, ready to confront the Count, and Susanna (in her guise as the Countess) orders him to remain silent. At first, believing that Susanna is the real Countess, Figaro starts to tell her of the Count's intentions but quickly realizes that the woman speaking to him is, in fact, his wife. He plays along with the joke and addresses her as the Countess, passionately declaring his love. Outraged, Susanna attacks him, but he reveals that he recognized Susanna's voice and the two reconcile.

The Count enters searching for "Susanna," who has eluded him in the trees. Seeing the Count, Figaro kneels before the "Countess" with further declarations of love. Enraged, the Count shouts for his servants, calling all to arms in a raging fury. In the chaos, all beg the Count for forgiveness, but he refuses...at which point the real Countess enters and reveals the ruse.

The Count, chastened and repentant, earnestly asks his wife for forgiveness, which she grants him. Everyone rejoices that love has overcome this day of torments and follies!

Nancy Hermiston, O.C., Director



Canadian-born lyric coloratura soprano Nancy Hermiston has performed throughout Europe and North America. Parallel to her extensive singing career, Ms. Hermiston worked as a voice teacher, stage director, and Co-coordinator with the University of Toronto's Opera and Performance Divisions. In 1995, she joined the University of British Columbia's School of Music as the Head of the Voice and Opera Divisions, where she established the UBC Opera Ensemble.

Professor Hermiston is also a favourite guest for master classes throughout Canada, the United States, China, and Germany. Her UBC Opera Ensemble tours regularly to the Czech Republic, Germany, Ontario, and throughout British Columbia. The Opera Ensemble gave their first performances in Beijing and Chengdu in May of 2009 and Shanghai in 2010 and 2011. Ms. Hermiston appeared as Stage Director with the Regina Opera for *The Barber of Seville* and *La Cenerentola* and with the Vancouver Opera twice for *Die Fledermaus*, *La Traviata*, *La Bohème* and in 2016, directed their production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, starring UBC Alumna and her former student, Simone Osborne.

In 2004, Professor Hermiston was named the UBC University Marshal, and in 2008, UBC awarded her the Dorothy Somerset Award for Performance and Development in the Visual and Performing Arts. She was also honoured with a Killam Teaching prize in 2010. In October 2011, she received an Opera Canada Rubie Award for her contributions to opera in Canada. Ms. Hermiston was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in December 2013. In 2017, she was awarded the Canadian Music Centre's BC Award of Excellence, and in November 2017, Alumni UBC recognized Professor Hermiston with the Honorary Alumnus Award. In 2018, she received the Faculty of Arts 2017/18 Dean of Arts Award for her outstanding contributions to UBC's creative research, teaching, and service to the scholarly and broader community. In 2018 Ms. Hermiston was inducted into the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame.

UBC Opera Ensemble

The University of British Columbia Opera Ensemble was founded by Canadian lyric coloratura, Nancy Hermiston, in 1995. Beginning with a core of seven performers, Ms. Hermiston has built the program to a 90-member company. The Ensemble performs three main productions at UBC every season, several Opera Tea Concerts, and a series of *Singer Behind the Song* events featuring international stars who work with Ensemble students. As well, the Ensemble has several engagements with local community partners such as the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Opera, and Bard on the Beach. In addition, the Ensemble travels each year to the Czech Republic to gain valuable European performance experience. Frequently they appear in concert with the Plzen Opera Orchestra, and they are regular guests at the Nürnberg Opera House for their Musikalischen Damen Teas (founded by Prof Hermiston in 1985). They have also given several concerts in Beijing, Shanghai, and Chengdu, China. The Ensemble has also toured throughout B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. The Ensemble's mission is to provide an outstanding performance and academic education for young, gifted opera singers, preparing them for international careers. Past main-stage productions have included *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Die Gärtnerin aus Liebe*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Suor Angelica*, *La Bohème*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *The Bartered Bride*, *Manon*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Florence: the Lady with the Lamp*, *Dreamhealer*, *Falstaff*, *Don Giovanni*, *Cendrillon*, *Albert Herring*, the Western Canadian Premiere of Harry Somer's *Louis Riel*, *The Crucible*, *Die Lustige Witwe (The Merry Widow)*, *Rusalka*, *Così fan tutte*, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *Carmen*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *The Florentine Straw Hat*, *La Traviata*, *A Night in Venice (Eine Nacht in Venedig)*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Consul*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *La Cenerentola*, *Il Tabarro* and *Gianni Schicchi*, *Silent Night*, *Pasażerka*, and *Il Viaggio a Reims*, and *Mansfield Park*.



UBC Opera production of *The Dreamhealer*, 2008. Photo by Tim Matheson.

David Agler, Conductor



David Agler served as the Artistic Director for Ireland's Wexford Festival Opera from 2005-2019. He has served as Artistic Director for Opera Festival of New Jersey, Music Director for Vancouver Opera, Principal Conductor for the Australian Opera, Resident Conductor for San Francisco Opera, Principal Guest Conductor for Oper der Stadt Köln, and conductor and Administrator for the Spoleto Festival.

Mr. Agler has led several premieres including the U.S. premiere of a chamber orchestra version of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, a newly revised version of Ned Rorem's opera *Miss Julie*, John Harbison's *Winter's Tale*, and the world premiere of William Bolcom's opera *Dinner at Eight* for Minnesota Opera and Wexford Festival Opera. For the University of British Columbia, he conducted the first performance of *Dream Healer* by Lloyd Burritt.

Notable guest conducting engagements include productions with the Wexford Festival Opera, Teatro Colón (Buenos Aires), Santa Fe Opera, Seattle Opera, Netherlands Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Opera Theater of St. Louis, New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, l'Opéra de Montréal, Minnesota Opera, Manitoba Opera, and Opera Colorado.

As a symphonic conductor, he has led concerts with the San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Winnipeg Symphony, Warsaw Philharmonic, Edmonton Symphony, National Arts Centre (Ottawa) Orchestra, CBC Radio Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Symphony, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, and San Francisco Chamber Symphony.

As Music Director for Vancouver Opera, Mr. Agler earned particular acclaim for productions of repertoire from the twentieth century, including *Peter Grimes*, *The Makropoulos Case*, *Les dialogues des Carmélites*, *Jenůfa*, *Bluebeard's Castle*, *Erwartung* and the Canadian premiere of Carlisle Floyd's opera *Susannah*.

Throughout David Agler's career, he has been involved with the education of young singers. He has had ongoing associations with UBC, The Banff Centre for the Arts, and The Curtis Institute.

Tina Chang, Pianist



Pianist and Coach, Tina Chang, is currently on the music staff at Vancouver Opera, and at Wexford Festival Opera in Ireland. Based in Vancouver, she has been involved with Chor Leoni, re:Naissance Opera, Health Arts Society, and Queer Arts Festival. She is currently on faculty at the Vancouver Academy of Music, and is also on the coaching staff at the University of British Columbia.

Past engagements include: faculty coach and pianist at Hawaii Performing Arts Festival; coach at UBC Summer Vocal Workshop; staff pianist and coach at soundSCAPE New Music Festival in Cesena, Italy; music director with Fear No Opera in Victoria; coach and répétiteur at Mill City Summer Opera in Minneapolis; pianist and coach with the Atelier Lyrique at the Opéra de Montréal; assistant coach at Glimmerglass Opera Festival; staff coach and sessional lecturer at Dalhousie University; pianist and coach at SongFest; and fellowships at Aspen Opera Theatre Center, Music Academy of the West, and the Vancouver International Song Institute (VISI).

Tina holds a Bachelor of Music degree from University of British Columbia and a Master of Music degree from University of Minnesota.



UBC Opera production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2016. Photo by Tim Matheson.

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Grant Windsor
Prof. Robert Gardiner, Theatre UBC
Lynn Burton, Properties, Theatre UBC



UBC Opera production of *Eugene Onegin*, 2017. Photo by Tim Matheson.

Production Team

DIRECTOR

Nancy Hermiston

CONDUCTOR

David Agler

LIGHTING DESIGN

Jeremy Baxter

COSTUME DESIGN

Parvin Mirhady

COSTUME ASSISTANT

Elena Razlog

OPERA COACHES

Richard Epp

Tina Chang

Michael Onwood

Derek Stanyer

PIANIST

Tina Chang

STAGE MANAGER

Collette Berg

WIGS

Elke Englicht

PROPS

Lynn Burton

PROPS ASSISTANTS

Matthew McLellan

Hannah Ernst

Emma Jang

COSTUME TECHNICIANS

Hannah Ernst

Catherine Thornsley

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Neusha Amir-Rahmani

PROGRAMME

Magdalena How

Leila Kirves

MARKETING COORDINATION AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Miles Linklater

EVENTS MANAGER

Francesca Corrado

ASSISTANT STAGE AND EVENTS MANAGER

Jackson Allen

OFFICE ASSISTANTS

Magdalena How

Leila Kirves

SURTITLES

Magdalena How

Emma Petersen Melland

OPERA LIBRARIAN

Alyssa Samson

STUDENT BOX OFFICE DIRECTOR

Katie Fraser

BOX OFFICE WORKER

Emma Jang

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR/ CARPENTER

Grant Windsor

ASSISTANT CARPENTER

Philip Piper

STUDENT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Matthew McLellan

ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTORS

Neusha Amir-Rahmani

Roshaan Saulnier

ASSISTANT LIGHTING TECHNICIAN

Liam Robertson

COVID-19 SAFETY OFFICERS

Carl Armstrong

Nadia Roberts

Collide Film Crew

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Mike Southworth

CAMERA OPERATORS

Aaron Nathanson

Mike Southworth

Adam PW Smith

Barry Ambrosio

Hubert Kang

EDITORS

Micaela Peragallo

Mike Southworth

Chan Centre

PRODUCTION MANAGER

David Humphreys

BOX OFFICE DIRECTOR

Trevor Mangion

ASSISTANT HEAD STAGE

Don Robinson

HEAD LIGHTING

Andrew Riter

ASSISTANT HEAD LIGHTING

Jason Conroy

HEAD RECORDING

James Perrella

HEAD AUDIO

Lloyd Balsler

ASSISTANT HEAD AUDIO

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