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Mélanie  
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Mozart's Requiem

Le Requiem de Mozart

FEATURED GUESTS / INVITÉS SPÉCIAUX

Choeur Louisbourg

MONIQUE RICHARD, DIRECTOR/DIRECTRICE

Suzanne Taffot

SOPRANO

Rebecca Cuddy

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Owen McCausland

TENOR

Branden Olsen

BASS

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March 25, 26, and 27, 2024

# Message from the President

REID PARKER



Fittingly, Symphony New Brunswick is presenting Mozart's *Symphony no. 40 in G Minor* in celebration of Symphony NB's 40th anniversary. Symphony NB has had a long relationship with Mozart, one of the great masterminds in music history. Also on the program is his famous *Requiem*, last performed by SNB in 2006.

As a witness to and participant in the past forty years of our orchestra, it is almost impossible to express the thanks owed to the many musicians, volunteers, donors, and patrons who have made it possible for this orchestra to survive and thrive. Do we truly appreciate how much progress has been made over these four decades? From its early beginnings as a humble community orchestra to the fine professional ensemble of today, Symphony NB has become a cultural institution of which all New Brunswickers should be very proud. I know I am!

I am pleased to announce a contribution of \$231,000 by the Canada Cultural Investment - Endowment Incentives Component to the Symphony New Brunswick Foundation. The remarkable growth in the Foundation is one of the main reasons why we are able to celebrate this 40th anniversary. The Government of Canada has played its part through our Foundation, and now we all need to add our ongoing support to ensure Symphony NB's future remains secure. Continue to buy tickets, sponsor a student, bring a friend to the Symphony, give a donation to either the Symphony or the Symphony Foundation - these are ways you can help and we can welcome everyone into the Symphony NB family.

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# Biography

## MÉLANIE LÉONARD

Born in Montréal, Mélanie Léonard is Music Director of Symphony New Brunswick and Assistant Professor of Instrumental Conducting (Contemporary Music) at McGill University's Schulich School of Music. She was previously Resident and Associate Conductor at the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director at the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra.

As a guest conductor, she has worked with many institutions including the Montréal Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Les Violons du Roy, Orchestre Métropolitain, and the National Arts Center Orchestra, as well as symphony orchestras in Edmonton, Regina, Victoria, Winnipeg, Québec and Nova Scotia.

Ms. Léonard has worked on soundtracks for *Aura* at the Montréal Notre-Dame Basilica, *Paradise City* in South Korea, and for Cirque du Soleil's *Land of Fantasy*. Mélanie has founded three contemporary music ensembles: Prima Ensemble, Wild West New Music Ensemble, and the Calgary New Music Festival. In 2023-2024, Ms. Léonard will conduct Orchestre Métropolitain and the Saskatoon Symphony. She will also be making her debut with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Léonard was the first woman to complete a Doctorate in Orchestral Conducting at Université de Montréal. In 2012, she received the Canada Council for the Arts' Jean-Marie Beaudet Award in Orchestra Conducting.





# Welcome Message

MÉLANIE LÉONARD

Opening tonight's concert is one of Mozart's most beloved symphonies: the *40th*, to commemorate our 40th year under the banner of Symphony New Brunswick. Celebrating our history and looking ahead are underlying themes for this concert.

Ever since I first heard Mozart's *Requiem*, I have wanted to conduct it. It speaks to my heart and I have listened to it more times than I can count! I am delighted to welcome Choeur Louisbourg and share the stage with them again, along with our four soloists Suzanne Taffot, Rebecca Cuddy, Owen McCausland and Branden Olsen.

These four talented artists are helping to build the future of classical music while lending their voices to this masterwork of the past.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Mélanie Léonard". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large loop at the end.

# Special Guests

MONIQUE RICHARD

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CHOEUR  
LOUISBOURG



Monique Richard is a full professor in the Department of Music at the Université de Moncton in New Brunswick where, since 2006, she has been responsible for the vocal ensembles, including the Department of Music Choir, as well as for the music education and conducting technique courses. In addition to directing the Louisbourg Choir, she is also the

musical director of the Beauséjour Choir and the Faubourg du Mascaret Intergenerational Choir.

She received a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy in 1985 and a Bachelor of Music Education in 1986 from the Université de Moncton. In 1994, she completed a Master's degree in Choral Conducting at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. After an 18-year career in schools as a music-educator and curriculum advisor in the arts and music, she pursued doctoral studies and obtained her Doctorate in Education from the Université de Moncton in 2013.

Monique Richard is very involved and active on the choral singing scene in Acadia. Her reputation allows her to be invited to the Atlantic region, Quebec and France as a judge or clinician at music festivals. She is the perfect example of a cultural transmitter who practices what she teaches, constantly striving for excellence and valuing the place of modern, living Acadian culture. Her authenticity and love of choral music leads her to want to create rallying projects that resemble her: sensitive, unique and resolutely turned towards the future.

# Special Guests

## CHOEUR LOUISBOURG



Choeur Louisbourg was born from the vision to create a professional choir in New Brunswick specializing in early music. It is made up of trained and experienced musicians from all over the province. Its inaugural concert took place on October 15, 2006, in the Saint-Anselme Church in Dieppe. Thereafter the choir quickly established itself in the cultural landscape of the province, and is regularly invited to collaborate with other leading arts organizations in New Brunswick.

It was the choir in residence at the Sackville Festival of Early Music from 2006 to 2014. In 2015, Service d'Action Culturelle et Artistique de l'Université PARIS 8 invited the choir to take part in Rencontres Chorales 2015. In 2018, the choir launched its first CD, *Chansons d'amour d'Acadie et de France*, under the ATMA Classique label. In 2020, the choir was invited to take part in the Messiah/Complex, an initiative of the Against the Grain theatre company, in collaboration with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and over a dozen soloists and choirs from different communities in Canada, to the acclaim of the New York Times, the BBC and France Musique.

# Special Guests

SUZANNE TAFFOT

SOPRANO

Described by critics as “a voice to watch”, Suzanne Taffot stands out for her rich, colourful timbre, her ease on stage and her touching interpretations. After making her debut with the Orchestre Métropolitain in Fauré’s *Requiem*, Suzanne Taffot took part in the recording of melodies and arias by the famous composer Gershwin, with the Sinfonia de Lanaudière orchestra conducted by Stéphane Laforest.



She has also appeared as a soloist at the Opéra de Montréal, Opéra de Québec, Opéra de Limoges, Shenzhen Opera in China, the Kosice Symphony House in Slovakia, and the Gärtnerplatz Theater in Munich, where she was a resounding success as Mimì in Puccini’s *La Bohème*. She was soloist in Brahms’ *Requiem* with the Orchestre Métropolitain conducted by Maestro Yannick Nézet-Séguin (a concert which was nominated in the Romantic Music category of the Prix Opus 2023, awarded by the Conseil québécois de la musique) and brilliantly interpreted the role of the Cantatrice in the world premiere of the opera *Yourcenar – une île de passions*, composed by Éric Champagne and co-produced by the Opéra de Montréal and the Opéra de Québec.

More recently, Suzanne brilliantly interpreted the role of Dzifa in the world premiere of the opera *Of The Sea* with Tapestry Opera in Toronto, a role for which she was nominated in the “Outstanding Performances” category of the 2023 Dora Academy Awards.

Suzanne holds a Master’s degree in Opera from the Université de Montréal and studies under the direction of Adrienne Savoie.

# Special Guests

REBECCA CUDDY

MEZZO-SOPRANO



Métis/Canadian mezzo-soprano Rebecca Cuddy is acknowledged as among “the next generation who are going to do incredible things.” (The Whole Note, 2019) She has an extensive record of operatic and symphonic performances across Canada, and appears this season as a member of The Indigdivas with the Allegra Chamber Orchestra and Calgary Philharmonic. She will

also premiere the opera *Bulrusher* with West Edge Opera in Cincinnati and make her Manitoba Opera debut as Josette LaGrande in *Li keur: Riel's Heart of the North*.

Rebecca is the 2022 graduate of the National Theatre of Canada Indigenous Artist Residency program. She holds a Masters in Voice and Opera from The Royal Academy of Music, London, UK, and a Bachelors in Music with Honours in Voice Performance from Western University. Rebecca is one of the recipients of the Dora Award for Outstanding Ensemble Work in Soundstreams' *Two Odysseys: Pimootewin / Gállábártnit*, and is the inaugural winner of the Rose-Ellen Nichols Award in the Performing Arts.

Rebecca is a strong advocate for Indigenous voices and storytelling in the performing arts. She is of mixed heritage which includes Métis, Anishinaabe, Cree, Welsh, English, Scottish and Irish roots. She grew up as a citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario and is grateful for the generous support they have shown her throughout her growth as an artist.



# Special Guests

OWEN McCAUSLAND

TENOR

Hailing from New Brunswick, Canadian Tenor Owen McCausland is increasingly in demand for engagements with both opera companies and symphonies across North America. Operatic engagements have included performances with the Cleveland Orchestra, Pacific Opera Victoria, the Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, the Adelaide Festival, Opera



in Concert (Toronto), Opéra de Montréal, and Manitoba Opera. He premiered *Chaakapesh: The Trickster's Quest* under the baton of Kent Nagano with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal and toured the production from the Arctic to the interior of Quebec.

Symphonic engagements have included the Toronto Symphony, the Ottawa Symphony, Symphony Nova Scotia, the Regina Symphony, the London Symphonia, the Kitchener Waterloo Symphony and Against the Grain Theatre.

An alumnus of the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio, Owen was a finalist and winner of the Canadian Encouragement Award in the George London Singing Competition and also a semi-finalist in the Montréal International Music Competition.

Owen holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Dalhousie University and a Masters of Music in Historical Performance from the University of Toronto.

# Special Guests

BRANDEN OLSEN

BASS



Branden Olsen is a rising Atlantic Canadian bass-baritone in his second year of the McPhee Artist Development Program, and is a pedagogical clinician and conductor of exceptional promise. In 2021 Branden won first place (voice) at the Federation of Canadian Music Festivals National Competition. He holds a Master's in both choral conducting and voice performance and is

currently studying under renowned Canadian tenor David Pomeroy.

Branden was honoured to workshop the newly commissioned *February* with Opera on the Avalon, and also to conduct the Atlantic Boychoir in Cornwall, UK. He was recently seen on the Calgary Opera stage as Servo/Medico (*Macbeth*), and with the Little Opera Company in Winnipeg as Papageno (*The Magic Flute*).

Branden is proudly supported by ArtsNB.

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# Program

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 - 1791)

*Symphony No. 40 in G Minor K.550*

Molto allegro  
Andante  
Menuetto, Allegretto - Trio  
Finale. Allegro assai

*Intermission*

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 - 1791)

*Requiem in D Minor K.626*

*Introitus*

**Requiem aeternam** ... (S + Chorus)

*Kyrie*

**Kyrie eleison** ... (Chorus)

*Sequentia*

**Dies irae**, dies illa ... (Chorus)

**Tuba mirum** spargens sonum ... (SATB soli)

**Rex tremendae** majestatis ... (Chorus)

**Recordare**, Jesu pie ... (SATB soli)

**Confutatis** maledictis ... (Chorus)

**Lacrymosa** dies illa ... (Chorus)

*Offertorium*

**Domine, Jesu** Christe, Rex gloriae ... (SATB soli + Chorus)

**Hostias** et preces ... (Chorus)

*Sanctus*

**Sanctus**, Sanctus, Sanctus ... (Chorus)

**Hosanna** in excelsis ... (Chorus)

*Benedictus*

**Benedictus** qui venit ... (SATB soli)

**Hosanna** in excelsis ... (Chorus)

*Agnus Dei*

**Agnus Dei**, qui tollis peccati mundi ... (Chorus)

*Communio*

**Lux aeterna** luceat is ... (S + Chorus)

**Requiem aeternam** ... (Chorus)

# Program Notes

REID PARKER

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)**

***Symphony No.40 in G Minor, K.550 (1788)***

New Brunswick fans of Mozart's *Symphony No. 40 in G Minor* have had a long wait to hear this masterpiece, the last complete performance by Symphony NB occurring over thirty years ago. This neglect is undeserved, the 40th being at the centre of the final three symphonies regarded by most critics as the best Mozart composed. They are more intense than his previous symphonies and show signs that the composer was beginning to anticipate change on the musical horizon.

While accounts differ about whether Mozart and Beethoven crossed paths in Vienna in 1781, it is known with certainty that Beethoven was influenced by Mozart's music, especially by the 40th Symphony which is said to have partly inspired Beethoven's own *Symphony No. 5 in C Minor*. But is it possible Mozart, when writing these final great works, was similarly influenced by what he heard in the early music of the very young Beethoven? If they did meet, so the story goes, Mozart is said to have remarked "Don't lose sight of this young man, he will one day tell you things that will surprise you."

Most annotators describe K.550 as the gloomiest of Mozart's last symphonies, one of only two he wrote in a minor key. However, the gloom is hard to detect. The opening might lack the cheerfulness found in the beginning movements of both the 39th and 41st Symphonies, but it is rife with melody and prances along as if the creator hadn't a care on his mind. There is no slow introduction, the principal theme appearing on the fourth beat of the first measure. This straightforward sonata-form *allegro molto* movement is followed by a graceful *andante* in E-flat. If we expect to hear any Mozartean angst in this symphony, the opening minuet section of the *allegretto* in G minor will have to do, but it is quickly offset by a lighthearted trio section. The finale is a bit tempestuous for Mozart and we can forgive him if he dwells a little too long on his principal theme, but it is a glorious finish to one of his finest creations.

# Program Notes

REID PARKER

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791)**

***Requiem*, K.626 (1791)**

Miloš Forman's 1984 film *Amadeus* did a great disservice to composer Franz Xaver Süssmayer (1766-1803) when it depicted Mozart dictating the *Requiem* from his deathbed to his archrival Antonio Salieri. The latter had nothing to do with it; Süssmayer completed the score in 1792, a year after Mozart died. The relationship between the two composers is unclear: by some accounts the two were collaborators; according to others, Süssmayer was Mozart's student.

The movie also over-dramatized the circumstances of the work's origin. The *Requiem* was not commissioned by some mysterious masked man but by Count Franz von Walsegg-Stuppach (1763-1827), who had a penchant for claiming he had composed music actually written by others. Part of the agreement was that Mozart could not make copies of the *Requiem* or disclose his authorship, so it was obviously Walsegg's intention to introduce the new work fraudulently. Inconveniently for Walsegg, Mozart died before he finished it.

So how much of the *Requiem* was actually written by Mozart and how much by Süssmayer? The completed work consists of eight sections: *Introitus*, *Kyrie*, *Sequentia*, *Offertorium*, *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, *Agnes Dei*, and *Communio*. The *Sequentia* further breaks down into *Dies Irae*, *Tuba Mirum*, *Rex Tremendae*, *Recordare*, *Confutatis*, and *Lacrymosa*. In *Amadeus*, it is the *Confutatis* that Mozart is dictating to Salieri. In fact, Mozart composed the first eight measures of the *Lacrymosa* and everything that preceded it, but the remainder of the *Lacrymosa* and the last five major sections of the *Requiem* were the work of Süssmayer, perhaps aided by knowledge of how to incorporate repeats later in the work. It is a testament to his skill that the complete *Requiem* is performed so frequently. Ironically, the most familiar section is the *Lacrymosa*.

Many composers have set the Requiem Mass to music, including the likes of Berlioz, Dvořák, and Verdi. Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, written contemporaneously with his *Ninth Symphony* and in a similarly (cont.)

# Program Notes

REID PARKER

grand style, is a Requiem whether named that or not. In the twentieth century, Benjamin Britten composed his magnificent and moving *War Requiem* and others like Penderecki and Ligeti have added to the canon. All used contemporary styles to capture the spirit of the Mass and, because they all composed in the post-classical period, their works are much more dramatic than Mozart/Süssmayer.

Nevertheless, Mozart's *Requiem* remains a work of great beauty and perhaps a more comforting accompaniment to an event like the one that inspired its composition. Berlioz composed his *Requiem* in honour of a national day of mourning, and Britten's commemorates one of the most traumatic conflicts in human history. Mozart's *Requiem*, on the other hand, was commissioned in memory of Walsegg's deceased wife - tragic no doubt for Walsegg, but not a world-remembered event.



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**2023/2024**

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