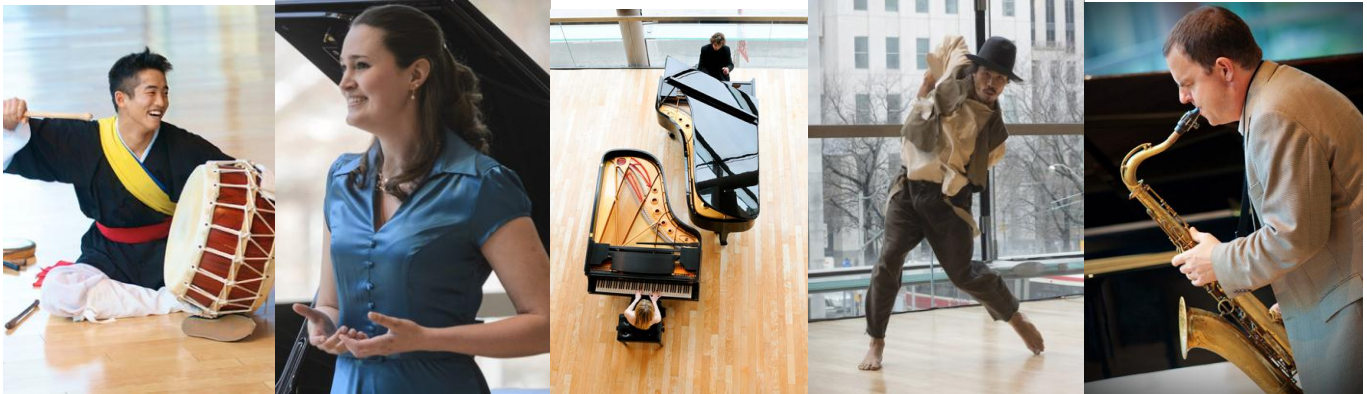


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## **COC'S FREE CONCERT SERIES RETURNS WITH DIVERSE MIX OF INTERNATIONAL TALENT AND RISING STARS FOR 2013/2014 SEASON**



**“I’m usually very secretive about little gems like this but I’m spilling the beans because the COC Free Concert Series is just too good to pass up. And if it means that I have to get there super early to get a decent seat now that you all know about it, so be it... To say it’s a stunning experience is an understatement.”**  
**(1LoveTO)**

**Toronto – The Canadian Opera Company’s Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre** kicks off an eighth season of dynamic programming this fall, bringing together established artists and rising young talent from Canada and around the world. In a popular Free Concert Series tradition, the first concert of the 2013/2014 season introduces audiences to the opera stars of tomorrow with a performance by the artists of the **COC Ensemble Studio** on **September 26, 2013 at 12 p.m.**

The 13/14 season features over 400 artists in 79 concerts and dance performances, including five world premieres featuring Canadian bass **Robert Pomakov** and the internationally acclaimed **Gryphon Trio**; the cutting-edge young musicians of **The Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble**; young American pianist **Kara Huber**; percussionist **Rick Sacks** of the inventive contemporary music collective **ArrayMusic**; and champions of new Canadian music, the **Canadian Art Song Project**.

For a second time, the Free Concert Series partners with the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra’s New Creations Festival**. Audiences will experience two important and exhilarating works of the contemporary two-piano repertoire: American legend John Adams’s iconic *Hallelujah Junction* and acclaimed German-born composer Hans Thomalla’s *Noema*. Thomalla makes a special appearance in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre to provide personal insight into his composition. Award-winning young contemporary specialists **Ryan MacEvoy McCullough** and **Claudia Chan** come together for the first time to perform both of these influential works.

First-time Free Concert Series appearances include performances by world-renowned baritone **Sir Thomas Allen**, acclaimed American tenor **Paul Appleby**, Holland’s hottest new saxophone ensemble **Amstel Quartet**, Canadian jazz icon **Joe Sealy**, Canadian harpsichordist **Hank Knox**, and three-time JUNO nominee and jazz vocalist **Elizabeth Shepherd**. After its overwhelming popularity last season, the Free Concert Series’ all-ages March Break programming returns with two interactive experiences featuring artists of the **COC Ensemble Studio** and **Jeng Yi Korean Drumming Ensemble**.

The Free Concert Series brings diverse artistic experiences to 15,000 people annually from September to June in what has become one of Toronto's most vibrant cultural hubs, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts**. Performances take place most Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12 p.m., and some Wednesdays at 12 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. Doors open 30 minutes prior to each performance and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Free Concert Series presents artists of the highest calibre in six varied series running throughout the season:

## VOCAL

International opera stars and rising young talent perform in 19 noon-hour recitals throughout the season. Several artists featured in the COC's 13/14 mainstage season make highly anticipated appearances in the Vocal Series, including Canadians baritone **Russell Braun**, mezzo-soprano **Allyson McHardy** and soprano **Tracy Dahl**, English baritone **Sir Thomas Allen**, American tenor **Paul Appleby**, and Ensemble Studio alumna soprano **Simone Osborne**.

In addition to the season opening concert on September 26, the artists of the **COC Ensemble Studio** appear in a variety of concerts throughout the year, including a program of highlights from Mozart's wry comedy *Così fan tutte* and two musical tributes to Benjamin Britten in honour of the centenary of the composer's birth.

The series also presents the world premiere of a new song cycle commissioned by the **Canadian Art Song Project**, under the direction of distinguished Ensemble Studio alumni **Lawrence Wiliford** and **Steven Philcox**, and a rare performance of Gagliano's 17th-century gem, *La Dafne*, featuring Baroque music specialists **Capella Intima** and **Toronto Continuo Collective**. Students from the **University of Toronto's Faculty of Music Opera Division** and the young artists of **Atelier lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal** showcase the bright future of Canadian opera.

## CHAMBER

The **Canadian Opera Company Orchestra** returns for a third season of concerts, curated by COC Music Director **Johannes Debus**. Five concerts feature the orchestra members in various combinations and showcase the works of classical music's greatest composers, including Bach, Beethoven and Britten. Members of the **COC Orchestra** also join forces with young artists of the **COC Ensemble Studio** and artists of the COC's 13/14 mainstage season in three special presentations.

Rounding out the series of 17 concerts are notable local and international artists and ensembles, including percussionist **Rick Sacks** of **ArrayMusic**, the all-female piano quartet **Ensemble Made in Canada**, Netherlands-based saxophone ensemble **Amstel Quartet**, cellist **Yegor Dyachkov**, violinist **Mark Fewer**, the **National Ballet Brass Quintet**, and ensembles from **The Glenn Gould School**.

## PIANO VIRTUOSO

Brilliant pianists from Canada and around the world present a richly varied repertoire in 13 concerts. Highlights include first-time appearances by **Kara Huber** with a world premiere from emerging American composer Natalie Draper; Chinese virtuoso **Haiou Zhang** in a rare Toronto appearance; award-winning young Canadian **Leonard Gilbert**; genre-bending Canadian pianist and composer **John Kameel Farah**; and, one of Canada's hottest new piano teams, **Duo Volando**. Rising stars returning to the series include **Alexander Seredenko**, **Mehdi Ghazi** and **Ryan MacEvoy McCullough**.

## JAZZ

The Jazz Series presents Canadian legends and emerging talent on the Toronto jazz scene in 14 sizzling and soulful performances. In a season featuring a broad repertoire of jazz standards and edgy new compositions, drummer **Morgan Childs** kicks off the series with his award-winning new quartet in a high-octane hour of swinging standards and original tunes. Back by popular demand, powerhouse pianist **Robi Botos** reunites with Cuban pianist **Hilario Durán** for another meeting of extraordinary musical minds. Additional highlights include **Michael Occhipinti** and **Shine On**'s tribute to the music of John Lennon, students and faculty of **Humber College**, the **Shirantha Beddage Quartet**, the **Elizabeth Shepherd Trio**, and the **Joe Sealy Trio**.

## DANCE

This season's seven dance performances showcase some of the city's most inventive dancers and choreographers, drawing from a variety of cultural and dance traditions. Styles range from the traditional Indian Kathak dancing of

**Infusion Dance**, to the urban street moves of **Gadfly Dance**. **Signal Theatre**'s preview of choreographer **Michael Greyyeyes**'s powerful new work, *A Soldier's Tale*, and excerpts from **Opera Atelier** and **Atelier Ballet**'s *Persée*, a lavish retelling of the classic Greek myth, also display the diversity of the series. The Free Concert Series welcomes return appearances from the University of Toronto's **Dharma Santi** with their distinguished guest artists from Bali, and notable Canadian companies **Peggy Baker Dance Projects** and **Ballet Jörgen**.

## WORLD MUSIC

Nine world music performances bring sounds and rhythms from around the world to the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. Audiences begin this global musical journey in Turkey with **Andrew Downing's Anahtar Project** in a tribute to Istanbul with oud player **Güç Başar Gülle**, and finish in Russia with domra virtuosa **Iraida Erokhina** and acclaimed accordionist **Alexander Sevastian** on bayan. Additional series highlights include **Nagata Shachu**'s heart-pounding taiko drum beats, **The Sicilian Jazz Project**'s cross-cultural blend of Sicilian folk music and modern jazz, and Indo-jazz meets classical Indian fusion group **Monsoon:Synthesis**.

**For a full calendar of events, please visit [coc.ca](http://coc.ca).**

The Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre is a focal point of the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room in the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, with its striking glass wall allowing for natural lighting and a view of University Avenue. Linking Ring 3 and Ring 4, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre provides seating for 100 patrons. Additional seating and standing locations on the walkway and the upper floor are also available.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The COC Ensemble Studio, underwritten in part by Peter M. Deeb and The Slight Family Foundation, is Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals and provides advanced instruction, hands-on experience, and career development opportunities. The Ensemble Studio is also supported by the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage, RBC Foundation, Hal Jackman Foundation and other generous donors.

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## About the Canadian Opera Company

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience support-base and one of the highest attendance and subscription rates in North America. Under its leadership team of General Director Alexander Neef and Music Director Johannes Debus, the COC is increasingly capturing the opera world's attention. The COC maintains its international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation by creating new productions within its diverse repertoire, collaborating with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracting the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The COC performs in its own opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. Designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects, the Four Seasons Centre opened in 2006, and is also the performance venue for The National Ballet of Canada. For more information on the COC, visit its award-winning website, [coc.ca](http://coc.ca).

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