



The Gala Opening Concert:
“Learning to Love Lieder”

Vancouver’s celebrated Song Circle troupe
presents a therapeutic cabaret/
lecture/recital - “Hearts and Flowers”.
(It’s about two lovers...surprise)

Rena Sharon, Tyler Duncan, Phoebe MacRae,
and Erika Switzer will entertain you with
...something completely different.

Saturday, September 24, 8 pm
Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall, University of Winnipeg

786-9000 · www.virtuosi.mb.ca · music@uwinnipeg.ca
Tickets: \$28 adults / \$26 seniors / \$16 students

The Song Circle

The Song Circle is an innovative performance company dedicated to the art of song. The company has earned praise for the fluid merge of script and song, magical atmosphere, and accessible blend of humorous and powerful story and music.

Rena Sharon, piano and narrator

Ms Sharon is the founder and Artistic Director of *The Song Circle*. She lectures extensively about Art Song, is often heard on CBC Radio, and is currently the Professor of Collaborative Piano Studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. As well, she is the Artistic Director of the Whistler Young Artist Experience, an interdisciplinary chamber music camp for gifted teens which blends intense music study with a spectrum of explorations comprising art, philosophy, political and cultural studies.

Born in Montreal, Rena Sharon began her life in chamber music the age of eight. She continued her training at the Eastman School and Indiana University, her principal teachers being Menahem Pressler and György Sebók. Her chamber music coaches

included Janos Starker, Franco Gulli, Eileen Farrell, and Joseph Gingold. Called “one of the finest musicians of her generation”, and a “national treasure”, she began concertizing throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe at 19. In 1987 she was awarded “Best Pianist” diploma at the International Voice Competition of Rio de Janeiro.

Among Canada’s foremost chamber musicians, her performance spectrum includes concerti and recitals. The roster of distinguished artists with whom Ms Sharon has performed includes Steven Isserlis, Jerome Hines, Gary Hoffman, Pamela Frank, Sharon Kam, Steven Dann, Douglas Boyd, Ben Heppner, Kevin MacMillan, Richard Margison, Marins Piccinini, Shauna Rolston, James Somerville, Martin Beaver, James Ehnes, Susan Platts, Wendy Nielsen, Benjamin Butterfield, Amanda Forsyth, and Scott St. John.

Rena Sharon is heard on the CBC national radio, and has recorded on the Marquis, Finlandia, Brava, Summit, Sono, CBC, and Boston Record labels. Her most recent CD is the collaboration with Scott St. John, “Salon Parisien”.

Phoebe MacRae, soprano

Canadian soprano Phoebe MacRae is sought after for her work in opera, chamber music, oratorio and recital presentation. With a repertoire from the 17th to the 21st Century she has performed across Canada and is frequently heard on regional and national CBC radio broadcasts. Ms MacRae made her European opera debut as *The Queen of the Night* in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Silesian State Opera in the Czech Republic. In Canada she has been a featured soloist with such companies and organizations as Pacific Opera Victoria, Modern Baroque Opera, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Festival Vancouver and the symphonies of Vancouver, Victoria and Nova Scotia.

Recent career highlights include creating the role of *Pélagie* in the première of the new Canadian opera *120 Songs for the Marquis de Sade* and performing the title role in a staged production of Telemann’s solo dramatic-cantata, *Ino*.

Ms MacRae is an artistic associate of the Modern Baroque Opera Company and, with a special flair for comedy, she is co-director of the critically acclaimed classical comedy duo *LEAVE IT TO DIVA*. She holds a Master of Music in Opera from the University of British Columbia and has obtained further training at the Aspen Opera Theatre Centre and the Banff Centre

Tyler Duncan, baritone

Mr. Duncan recitals and has been featured several times on CBC Radio. He is an active oratorio and opera singer, in 2000, giving his début as The Traveller in Britten’s *Curlew River* for Festival Vancouver and Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* for the same festival in 2003.

He began his vocal studies at the University of British Columbia and has studied at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich where he studied Lied interpretation with Helmut Deutsch, and at the Bavarian Theater Academy where he studied Opera. The Canada Council twice awarded him a grant to study with Prof. Edith Wiens at the Hochschule für Musik, Augsburg. He has been awarded prizes at the Wigmore Hall International Song Competition 2001, The International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition in Leipzig in 2002, and the ARD International Music Competition in Munich in 2003.

Recent performances include a Monteverdi program at the Berliner Staatsoper, Brahms' Liebeslieder Walzer at the Wigmore Hall in London and Bottom in Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Prinzregenten Theater in Munich.

Erika Switzer, piano

Erika is regularly featured on CBC with her duo partner, baritone Tyler Duncan. Together they won CBC Radio's Spotlight Competition, performed in the Début Young Concert Artist Series and were chosen by the Vancouver Sun as two of the "21 Artists of the 21st Century".

Canadian collaborative pianist Erika Switzer graduated with a Master of Music Degree in Piano Performance from the University of British Columbia, under Professors Jane Coop and Rena Sharon. She also holds a Master of Song Interpretation Degree from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München where she studied with Professor Helmut Deutsch. Ms. Switzer has studied at many international music academies including the Britten-Pears School (Aldeburgh, England), the Academie Musicale de Villecroze, France with Elly Ameling and Dalton Baldwin, and at the Franz-Schubert-Institut in Baden bei Wien, Austria.

In 2002, Ms. Switzer performed recitals with soprano Edith Wiens in Germany, across Canada, and at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC.

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Post-concert Reception Hosted By:

