

GORDON C. WALLIS

MEMORIAL OPERA COMPETITION

February 21 & 22, 2026
(Competition & Master Class)

Convocation Hall,
University of Saskatchewan

Admission: by donation

Presented, in partnership with the
Regina and Saskatoon Symphony Orchestras,
by the
Saskatchewan Music Festival Association

www.smfa.ca



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of
Arts and Science
SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS - MUSIC



REGINA
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
Gordon Gerrard
Music Director



Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra

Anytime.
Anywhere.

*THERE IS NO
PLACE LIKE
HOME*

Only on
ConcertStream.tv





ESTABLISHED IN 1908

Incorporated under the Non-Profit Corporations Act

SMFA programs and services reach lands covered by Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dakota, Dene, Lakota, Nakota and Saulteaux peoples, as well as homeland of the Métis.

HONORARY PATRONS

Her Honour the Honourable Bernadette McIntyre, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan
The Honourable Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan

HONORARY PRESIDENTS

Dr. Jeff Keshen, University of Regina
Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio, University of Saskatchewan

CORPORATE SPONSORS

SaskTel

SMFA is funded through the Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation.

PROVINCIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President..... **Dianne Gryba**, Saskatoon
- Vice President..... **Alisha Mann**, Estevan
- Past President..... **Jeri Ryba**, Moose Jaw
- Director **Katherine Bergman**, Regina
- Director **Marcie Carswell**, Moose Jaw
- Director **Karen Frandsen**, Regina
- Director **Abby Fuller**, Regina
- Director **Laureen Kells**, Tuffnell
- Director **Karen White**, Saskatoon

SMFA PROVINCIAL OFFICE

- Executive Director **Carol Donhauser**
- Executive Assistant **Mariel Unger**
- Administrative Assistant..... **Nancy Toppings**

PO Box 37005, Regina SK S4S 7K3
306-757-1722 | sask.music.festival@sasktel.net
www.smfa.ca



GORDON C. WALLIS MEMORIAL OPERA COMPETITION



In July 1999, prior to his death, Gordon Wallis established an opera competition to encourage and assist young Saskatchewan singers in furthering their vocal studies in opera. Held every two years under the administration of the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association, its \$5,000 first-place prize is one of a kind in Canada. In addition to the prize money, the winner may be featured as guest artist with the Saskatoon and Regina Symphony Orchestras.

Professor Wallis was a former Assistant Director of the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Regina. He was a valued member of the SMFA Syllabus Music Selection Committee, and he adjudicated our festivals across the province and throughout Western Canada. Wallis was a consummate musician, musical director, performer, and acknowledged authority on opera. His extensive collection of opera material – complete operatic scores, recordings, libretti, books, documents, periodicals, and programs from every major opera house in the world – is housed in the Gordon C. Wallis Opera Resource Room in Darke Hall in Regina. This resource is open for use to all who have an interest in music and, in particular, opera.

The competition is open to any non-professional vocalist between the ages of 20 and 35. Competitors must perform one art song in any style, and two contrasting arias from the standard operatic repertoire, in two different languages, and from two different periods.

PAST WINNERS

2000 - Michael Harris
2002 - Laurien Gibson
2004 - Allison Arends
2006 - Sarah Vardy
2008 - Jordie Hughton
2010 - Meara Conway
2012 - Chelsea Mahan
2014 - Whitney Mather
2016 – Allison Walmsley
2018 – Spencer McKnight
2020 – McKenzie Warriner
2022 – Angela Gjurichanin
2024 – Kateryna Khartova





SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS - MUSIC SCHOLARSHIPS

FOR MUSIC SPECIFIC PROGRAMS & STUDENTS

WE AWARD OVER

\$100,000

ANNUALLY

SCAN TO
KNOW MORE
AND APPLY



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of
Arts and Science
SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS - MUSIC

[ARTSANDSCIENCE.USASK.CA/MUSIC](https://artsandscience.usask.ca/music)

OPERA JUDGES



MEL BRAUN

Baritone Mel Braun is a versatile performer, equally at home in oratorio, recital, and opera, always open to new collaborations. He is well-known to Canadian audiences for his frequent performances and broadcasts in the Masterworks of Bach and Handel. These include performances with Tafelmusik, Calgary Bach Festival, Pro Coro Edmonton, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. New Music, another of Mel's interests, has seen him premiere works with Banff Centre, Manitoba Opera, Winnipeg's New Music Festival, Groundswell, and Toronto's New Music Gallery. As a recitalist, he is renowned for his creative approach to Song, whether singing Schumann's *Liederkreis* while on stage with Winnipeg's Q Dance, staging Wolf's

Italienisches Liederbuch, or tracing the life of Schubert among his friends as he completed his final work, *Die Winterreise*. His ongoing duo partnership with pianist Laura Loewen is at the heart of many of these collaborations.

As a teacher, Mel heads up the Vocal Program at the Desautels Faculty of Music, a program renowned for its collaborative and holistic approach to training singers. He has seen many of his students go on to significant careers as performers and teachers. Among Mel's many initiatives at the Faculty are the annual Opera Theatre School Tour, the Contemporary Opera Lab, the Professor Bach Project, and the Micro-Certificate in Songmaking, a course that trains local Singer-Songwriters in Songwriting, Music Production, and the Business of Music.

As a music director, Mel looks after the operatic ensembles at the Desautels Faculty, as well as working with Dead of Winter (formerly Camerata Nova), a choir devoted to exploring new approaches to Indigenous choral music. He is much in demand as an adjudicator and choral clinician and enjoys teaching many of the young rock singers that make up Winnipeg's burgeoning indie music scene. You'll find him wherever young singers need mentoring.

OPERA JUDGES

ROBYN DRIEDGER-KLASSEN



Robyn Driedger-Klassen has been seen on many recital, concert and opera stages. Known particularly for her zeal for contemporary music, she has performed and premiered many fascinating works of living composers. Her most recent film projects include a production with City Opera Vancouver of Jake Heggie's monodrama, *At the Statue of Venus* (available on YouTube) and a piece for Turning Point Ensemble's 1+1+1 Project with composer Jeffrey Ryan and flautist Brenda Fedoruk.

Robyn lives and teaches on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm | Musqueam, Sḵwxwú7mesh | Squamish & səliłwətał | Tsleil-Waututh Nations. She is grateful to be on this shared territory and acknowledges that sharing songs and listening to stories are fruitful ways of engaging in acts of reconciliation.

Robyn is the Department Head and Division Chair at the Vancouver Academy of Music where she works mainly with advanced students of classical voice. She also owns and operates Robyn D Klassen Voice Studio. She gains immense satisfaction and joy from teaching and her students regularly achieve glorious goals and live their wildest singing-dreams. Along with pianist Tina Chang, she co-directs OperaSparks Artist Development Workshop, a new program that helps established singers and pianists develop their own artistic ideas in Western Classical Opera.

Giving unsolicited reading recommendations to anyone who will listen, and growing an epic garden are her superpowers. She lives with her husband and two young vocal critics. By osmosis, she knows a considerable amount about black holes and deep-sea creatures. She knows the secrets to folding a fitted sheet and is an expert at avoiding Lego underfoot.

GORDON C. WALLIS MEMORIAL OPERA COMPETITION

Adjudicators — Mel Braun & Robyn Driedger-Klassen

MC – Dianne Gryba, SMFA President

6 pm: Opening remarks

HANNAH SALEN, soprano Kathleen Lohrenz Gable
Heimgang in der Frühe — Webern
Frère! Voyez!... Du gai soleil (Werther) — Massenet
Joy beyond measure, Mother! (Little Women) — Adamo

ARIELLE MacKINNON, soprano Kathleen Lohrenz Gable
Chacun le sait (La Fille du régiment) — Donizetti
Spiel ich die Unschuld vom Lande (Die Fledermaus) — Strauss
Winter Galaxy — Telfer

DANIELLE DAUNHEIMER, soprano Kathleen Lohrenz Gable
Deux Romances: L'âme évaporée, L. 65 — Debussy
Zeffiretti lusinghieri (Idomeneo, K.366) — Mozart
Endless Pleasure (Semele, HWV 58) — Handel

PAULINA SALISBURY, soprano Karen Reynaud
Frère! Voyez!... Du gai soleil (Werther) — Massenet
Caminante, son tus huellas — Raminsh
Monica's Waltz (The Medium) — Menotti

**** **Break – 15 minutes** ****

JORDAN WELBOURNE, baritone Kathleen Lohrenz Gable
Scorsi già molti paesi (Il Barbiere di Siviglia) — Paisiello
In Flanders — Gurney
O du, mein holder Abendstern (Tannhäuser) — Wagner

BRITTEN McGONIGAL, soprano Kathleen Lohrenz Gable
Batti, batti, o bel Masetto (Don Giovanni) — Mozart
Laurie's Song (The Tender Land) — Copland
¿De dónde venís, amore? — Rodrigo

KELSEY RONN, soprano Kathleen Lohrenz Gable
Chacun le sait (La Fille du régiment) — Donizetti
Sophie's Aria (Presentation of the Rose) (Der Rosenkavalier) — Strauss
Crickets — Cipullo

GORDON C. WALLIS MEMORIAL OPERA COMPETITION

The announcement of the winner will take place following the Masterclass that will be held Sunday, February 22, from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm.

The Masterclass is open to the public.
Admission by donation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the *collaborative artists* who have performed at this competition. Your talents and musical support are greatly appreciated.

Special thanks to:

Stephen Nicholson, photographer
Kathleen Lohrenz Gable and Karen Reynaud, accompanists
School for the Arts – Music, University of Saskatchewan

SMFA is funded through the Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation.



OPERA SYNOPSES

HANNAH SALEN

At the start of the second act of *Werther*, the village is celebrating the 50th marriage anniversary of the local pastor. The young poet, Werther, is heartbroken and depressed as the woman he loves, Charlotte, has married another man, Albert. Sophie, Charlotte's younger sister, sings *Frère! voyez!* in an attempt to brighten Werther's spirits.

Little Women – Beth has died. Jo and Aunt March read a letter from Amy, who is still in Europe. Amy writes “Joy beyond measure, Mother!” to their mother, Marmee. She declares her happiness as she and Laurie, having bonded during their time in Europe, are now married, and remarks on how she has changed and grown in love.

ARIELLE MacKINNON

In *La Fille du régiment* (The Daughter of the Regiment), the character Marie is a canteen who has been raised by the French 21st Regiment of soldiers after they found her abandoned on a battlefield. She falls for a young Tyrolean peasant named Tonio. However, Tonio is brought before the regiment as a prisoner. Marie tries to save him by explaining that he once saved her life. The soldiers celebrate Tonio's bravery, and Marie proudly sings the aria “*Chacun le sait*”, showing off her vocal range and expresses her deep affection and loyalty to her military family.

“*Spiel ich die Unschuld vom Lande*” (“If I play the innocent country girl”) is an aria sung by the character Adele, the maid of Eisenstein, in the operetta *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss II. Adele has been at Prince Orlofsky's masquerade party, pretending to be a glamorous actress, instead of a maid. She is now in the jailhouse scene imagining different roles she could play on stage, from a naive country girl to a sophisticated city lady. Adele is also showing off her vocal range and vocal abilities.

DANIELLE DAUNHEIMER

Idomeneo is a serious opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart based on a Greek myth set in the aftermath of the Trojan War. Idomeneo, King of Crete, survives a violent storm at sea by vowing to the god Neptune that he will sacrifice the first person he meets upon returning home. Tragically, that person is his own son, Idamante. Tormented by guilt, Idomeneo struggles to escape his vow while Neptune's wrath brings destruction to Crete. Meanwhile, a love triangle intensifies the drama: Idamante loves the Trojan princess Ilia, while the vengeful Electra also desires him. As divine punishment worsens, the truth of Idomeneo's oath is revealed. In the end, Neptune spares Idamante's life, demanding instead that Idomeneo relinquish the throne. Peace is restored as Idomeneo steps down, allowing Idamante and Ilia to rule together.

Semele is an opera by George Frideric Handel that retells a story from Greek mythology. It follows Semele, a mortal princess who becomes the lover of Jupiter (Zeus), king of the gods. Seduced by Jupiter's love and promises of divine favor, Semele grows increasingly proud and ambitious. Juno, Jupiter's jealous wife, disguises herself and manipulates Semele into demanding that Jupiter appear to her in his full godly form. Bound by an oath, Jupiter reluctantly agrees. When he reveals himself with divine power, Semele—being mortal—is consumed by the sight and ultimately perishes.

OPERA SYNOPSES

PAULINA SALISBURY

Werther shows a young poet who becomes deeply in love with Charlotte, the eldest daughter of the Bailiff. Although Charlotte feels the same way, she has made a promise to her dying mother to marry Albert, a stable and honourable man. Charlotte fulfills this promise, and Werther is left heartbroken.

Throughout the opera, Charlotte's younger sister Sophie represents optimism and emotional warmth. During a wedding celebration, Sophie sings "Frère! Voyez!... Du gai soleil" attempting to comfort Werther and encourage him to engage in the happiness around him.

As time passes, Charlotte struggles with guilt and suppressed love, while Werther becomes unable to endure his emotional suffering. In the final act, Werther takes his own life. Charlotte arrives too late, and the opera ends in tragedy.

The Medium follows Madame Flora, a harsh and manipulative medium who exploits grieving clients by hosting fake séances. Her daughter Monica (who represents innocence, purity) and Toby (a mute boy whom she brought in from the streets) assist her in creating these illusions of the clients' dead relatives.

Monica shares a bond with Toby. In "Monica's Waltz," she sings and dances playfully with him, expressing her dreams of love, warmth, and happiness with him beyond their confined world, speaking words for him that he could never say himself.

Madame Flora's behaviour becomes more violent and unstable, which leads to the tragic ending of Toby being shot and Madame Flora asking if he was the ghost that's haunting her.

JORDAN WELBOURNE

Il Barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville) is a comic opera that tells the story of Count Almaviva's pursuit of the affection of Rosina. In this aria, Figaro is telling the count where he has been and what he has done since last they met and implores the Count to allow Figaro to assist him in his pursuit of Rosalina.

Tannhäuser tells the story of a 13th century minstrel, Tannhäuser, who falls under the spell of Venus, the goddess of love. In this aria, Wolfram foreshadows the inevitable death of Elisabeth, whom he and the now-banished Tannhäuser had previously competed for. Elisabeth's heart is broken in Tannhäuser's absence, and Wolfram can see that it is only a matter of time before her heartbreak claims her life.

OPERA SYNOPSES

BRITTEN McGONIGAL

Don Giovanni follows the notorious Don Giovanni, a charismatic nobleman who lives a life of seduction, deceit, and pleasure, dragging his servant Leporello along for his schemes in Seville, Spain. This aria is sung by the peasant girl Zerlina to pacify her jealous fiancé, Masetto, after she's been tempted by Don Giovanni.

The Tender Land takes place in the Midwest during the Great Depression era and focuses on a young girl named Laurie. In this aria, Laurie is questioning her future after graduation, and what could be possible for her.

KELSEY RONN

La Fille du régiment (The Daughter of the Regiment) tells the story of Marie, a fearless young orphan raised by a regiment of French soldiers. When the man of her dreams turns out to be a rebel fighting against the French "family" she has always known, Marie will have to overcome war, fatherly disapproval, and even the discovery of her own noble birth to make her own happily-ever-after ending come true.

Der Rosenkavalier is a comic opera by Richard Strauss set in 18th-century Vienna, focusing on the romance between the mature Princess Marschallin and her young lover Octavian, complicated by the boorish Baron Ochs who seeks to marry Sophie, a wealthy merchant's daughter. Octavian, acting as Ochs's "Rosenkavalier," presents Sophie with a silver rose, but they fall in love, prompting the Marschallin to gracefully yield Octavian to Sophie, accepting the passage of time and the loss of her youthful love.

Tomorrow has your name all over it.

We know that investing in Saskatchewan means investing in our youth. That's why we provide the resources youth need to flourish.



SaskTel
cares

sasktel.com/cares

SaskTel 



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of
Arts and Science

SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS - MUSIC

MAKE MUSIC

at the University of Saskatchewan

Check out our Certificates, Bachelors and Masters programs in Music, with over \$100,000 in scholarships awarded annually!

