



**COUNTERPOINT
COMMUNITY
ORCHESTRA**

MUSIC DIRECTOR
ANDREW CHUNG

**CANADA'S FIRST
2SLGBTQIA+
ORCHESTRA**



2023/2024
40th Anniversary Season
Counterpoint Community Orchestra
- and -
Music Director: Andrew Chung
present

An Enchanted Queer Holiday Soirée

Featuring
Soprano, Rebecca Gray & Drag Queen, Fay Slift
Saturday, December 9th, 2023, 7:30 p.m.
East End United

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. We are grateful to the caretakers of this land and grateful to be able to perform music here.

An Enchanted Queer Holiday Soirée

Saturday, December 9th, 2023, 7:30 p.m.
East End United, Toronto

Andrew Chung – Music Director, Conductor
Gemma Donn – Paul Willis Concertmaster Chair
Enza Anderson – Emcee
Rebecca Gray – Soprano
Fay Slift – Story Narrator

Program

Overture from Die Fledermaus	Johann Strauss II
“Adele’s Laughing Song (Mein Herr Marquis)” from Die Fledermaus	Johann Strauss II Soprano, Rebecca Gray
T’was The Night Before Christmas	Bill Holcombe Narrator, Fay Slift
“Quando m’en vo” from La Bohème	Giacomo Puccini Rebecca Gray, Soprano
“Je veux vivre” from Roméo et Juliette	Charles Gounod Rebecca Gray, Soprano
Intermission	
The Nutcracker Suite	Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Christmas Sing Along	John Finnegan



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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Welcome to the opening concert of the 40th Anniversary Season for Counterpoint Community Orchestra. We are delighted to be offering this Enchanted Queer Holiday Soiree in a larger concert venue and with so many new orchestra members.

At this 40 year mark, the CCO is emphasizing its roots and its *raison d'être*. We are Canada's first 2SLGBTQIA orchestra; our mission statement continues to inform what we do: provide a safe, respectful space for musicians in that community and their allies to rehearse and perform. This season, all three of our concerts highlight queer soloists; our programme for our June 15 anniversary concert features works exclusively by queer composers.

Tonight, you will hear soprano Rebecca Gray performing opera arias. We are particularly proud to be featuring Rebecca as she played first violin with the CCO for several years before becoming a professional soprano and opera composer. You will also be treated to " 'Twas the Night Before Christmas," narrated by Drag Queen Fay Slift, a fun beginning to the holiday season.

Like every arts organization, the CCO's revenues do not cover its costs and we depend on the generosity of our donors and supporters. The Board is committed to ensuring the CCO continues for another 40, or more, years. Queer musicians in the future should have the same safe space we enjoy. Accordingly, tonight, you can contribute by purchasing a photo with narrator Fay Slift, buying 50/50 raffle tickets, or making a donation at the donation table where you can pick up a charitable receipt for donations of \$20 or more. All funds go toward the continuation of this unique organization and its many musical projects.

Thank you to our audience for being here tonight, and to our musicians, soloists, and volunteers whose efforts brought the enchantment to this evening.

Elizabeth Mitchell, Chair
Daniel Payne, Vice Chair
Kevin Seymour, Secretary
John Todd, Treasurer
David Brownstone, Member
Andrew B.Q. Lam, Member
Tetsuya Kobayashi, Member
Russel Westkirk, Member

Counterpoint Community Orchestra

Andrew Chung – Music Director
Gemma Donn – Paul Willis Concertmaster Chair
Enza Anderson – Emcee

Violin I

Erick Wawrzekiewicz +*
Joana Angeles-Roman
Alessandra Bosch-Spiteri
Jenny Hwang
Israel Matos
Chris Richards-Bentley
Elwyn Rowlands
Jesse Tamang
Pona Tran
Michael Yang

Violin II

Chris Yoshida *
Katya Applegath
Jessica Fernando
Megan Foley
Rick Fraser
Paul Gibson
Elizabeth Mitchell
Ronald Mitchell
Rohan Nair
Finnegan Nam Vu
Ricky Tsai
Erin Whitby

Viola

David Brownstone *
Nicolas Alby-Gabara
Ashu Bost
Jennifer Hayes
Larry Reid
Jenny Shaw

Cello

Daniel Payne *
Mimian Cheng
Everly Conrad-Baldwin
Chloe Hsu
Terry Jackman
Robert Mitchell –
Kai Torres-Salbach
Russell Westkirk

Bass

Dylan Gamble +
Matthew Girolami +

Flute/Piccolo

Tetsuya Kobayashi *
Shauna Furois +

Oboe

Elizabeth Brown *
Abigail de Niverville

English Horn

Elizabeth Brown *

Clarinet

Helen Li *
Danielle Waxer +

Bass Clarinet

Katherine Carleton +

Bassoon

Kevin Seymour *
Emily Kessler

Trumpet

Katherine Brown
Claire Dos Santos
Tyler Peck

French Horn

Toby Milton *
Steven Vande Moortele
Emma Soldaat +
Caroline Spearing

Trombone

Martin Hubel +
Kenneth Luna

Bass Trombone

Jeff Buchyns

Percussion

Brad Kirkpatrick +

Keyboard

Jennifer Langton +



Andrew Chung Music Director & Conductor

Appointed Music Director of the Counterpoint Community Orchestra in June 2017, **Andrew Chung** also serves as the Music Director of the Silverthorn Symphonic Winds and the Mississauga Pops Concert Band, and other musical groups in GTA area.

While attending the University of Toronto, he was appointed Music Director of the Pickering Philharmonic Orchestra and Assistant Conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He has also served as Music Assistant to the Opera Mississauga. He has guest conducted the Hart House Orchestra, the North York Concert Orchestra, the Toronto Philharmonic, Korean Canadian Symphony Orchestra, Northdale Concert Band, the Toronto Chinese Youth Orchestra, the Mississauga Youth Orchestra, the Toronto Youth Orchestra, the Hong Kong Symphonic Band, the Hong Kong Youth Symphonic Band, and the Hong Kong Chamber Wind Philharmonic.

As an orchestra musician, Mr. Chung served as the principal trumpet with the Hong Kong Chamber Orchestra, the Hong Kong Youth Symphony, the Asia Youth Orchestra (under the direction of Yehudi Menuhin and Alexander Schneider), and the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra. He made his solo debut with the Moordale Festival Orchestra.

Mr. Chung attended the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the University of Hong Kong, the University of Toronto, and the University of Freiburg, Germany. His trumpet teachers include Stephen Chenette, Robert Nagel, Henry Nowak, Jeffrey Reynolds, and Larry Weeks. He also studied privately with Arnold Jacobs and Murray Crewe. A scholarship from the Centre d'Arts Orford allowed him to study conducting with Raffi Armenian and Agnes Grossman. He has also participated in the Conductors Apprentice Program with the Huntsville Festival of the Arts Orchestra. His other conducting teachers include Dwight Bennett, Tak-Ng Lai, and Kerry Stratton.

Rebecca Gray

Soprano



Rebecca Gray is a soprano, composer, and improviser passionate about performing and creating both classical and contemporary repertoire, always seeking to bring queerness and feminism to everything she does. She performed with Pacific Opera Victoria as part of the Civic Engagement Program in 2021–2022 for which she composed, performed, and directed an original opera video. This video “Jess” was recently selected as a finalist for Opera America’s Awards for Excellence in Digital Opera.

Rebecca’s creativity, energy, and perfect pitch are sought after in the creation of new work, and she has performed with Tapestry Opera (Toronto), OperaQ (Toronto), Esprit Orchestra (Toronto), Highlands Opera (Haliburton, ON) and Code D’accès (Montréal). She also premiered the lead in *Pomegranate* (2019) with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. She is a member of FAWN Chamber Creative with whom she performs genre-bending vocal music, and has appeared as a finalist at the Eckhardt–Gramatté Contemporary Music Competition in Manitoba.

Equally at home in classic repertoire, Rebecca is a graduate of the University of Toronto Opera School, where she appeared as Donna Elvira in U of T’s *Don Giovanni*, and looks forward to performing popular arias with Toronto’s Counterpoints Orchestra in December. Rebecca’s unique compositional voice has been recognized by numerous commissions and fellowships, including opportunities to present work at the Atlantic Music Festival, the Banff Centre, the Westben Centre, and Chateau La Napoule in France. She harbors a particular passion for vocal music and received Canada Council support to develop *Bus Opera*, an absurdist fantasy about millennial alienation on public transit, excerpts of which were premiered by New Music Concerts in Toronto. She has composed unique, narrative-driven choral work for Voces Boreales (Montréal), Pro Coro (Edmonton), Soundstreams (Toronto) and the Capital Chamber Choir (Ottawa). A winner of the Mécénat Musica Prix 3 Femmes, she will develop *Raccoon Opera* – a fable of the housing crisis involving Toronto raccoons – with her sister, Rachel Gray, which will be presented at Salle Bourgie in Montreal in May 2024. Rebecca will perform the titular Raccoon role and is busy practicing her shrieks and hisses, in between her Mozart arias.

Fay Slift **Drag Queen**



Kindergarten teacher by day with the TDSB and The Lady Bear Extraordinaire on weekends, Fay Slift toddled onto the stage at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in the Winter of 2007. She has evolved into a unique and respected drag performer having many amazing opportunities to work alongside some of Toronto's finest performance artists.

She has entertained audiences at events such as World Pride 2015, The Rhubarb Festival, The Toronto Burlesque Festival, The Junior Festival at Harbourfront, Inside Out Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, TIFF, Toronto Fringe Festival, The Summerworks Festival, Luminato, OUT tv, the Scandelles, Starry Night, Rue Morgue Festival of Fear, CANFAR, AIDS Action NOW, Steers and Queers, The Bentway, Pride TO, the ROM, The AGO and the Frigid Fringe Festival in New York.

Fay is part of Fay & Fluffy's Storytime which has been creating inclusive and safe spaces for members of the LGBTQ+ community since 2016. Based in Toronto, they have been fortunate to do many local events at some of Toronto's biggest cultural institutions, as well as hit the road to adventures beyond the city. Their special events focus on books, songs and include lots of laughs to show that Reading is FUN-damental! They especially want to support families with LGBTQ2S parent(s) and gender variant children, and read culturally diverse books, by providing a supportive and inclusive environment focused on fun. Most recently, Fay & Fluffy were honoured to be the recipients of the 2020 OLA (Ontario Librarians Association) President's Award for promoting literacy, advocating for LGBTQ2+ children and their families. Most recently their children's tv show, "The Fabulous Show with Fay & Fluffy", was the recipient of the Shaw Rocket Fund Kids Choice Award at the Canadian Screen Awards.

Special Thanks to another Drag Artist!

Thank you to Drag Artist Qaptain for their support with our fundraising initiatives this evening! Check out their Instagram page @qpt_kit

OVERTURE FROM DIE FLEDERMAUS

JOHANN STRAUSS II



Johann Strauss II (1825–1899) was an Austrian composer known as the "Waltz King." Famous for works like "The Blue Danube" and "Die Fledermaus," he shaped the Viennese classical music tradition, leaving a lasting impact on the world of classical music. Strauss' elegant and danceable compositions continue to be celebrated globally.

Die Fledermaus was first performed at the Theater an der Wien on 5 April 1874 with Strauss himself at the podium. It is now recognized as Strauss' most famous operetta and, as one critic claims, is "primarily loved for what happens before anyone sets foot on the stage: the overture." Although only eight minutes long, the music is laden with melodies that are effervescent, playful, and unfailingly memorable. In typical overture form, each melodic theme is then introduced throughout the opera offering a musical framework for the dramatic structure.

The operetta was not a new form for Viennese audiences; however, when Strauss, one of their own, began to embrace this musical form, the public was delighted.

Translated literally as "The Bat", in reference to the masked ball that is at the heart of the plotline, the operetta seems light-hearted. However, by queering one's approach, it becomes a comedic satire that is farcical in its focus on mistaken identity, flirtation, and a practical joke that has unforeseen consequences. Gender roles and social classes are questioned, if not mocked, but all wrapped up in a kitschy, campy musical package. Later in our program, one of the main characters, Adele, a maid to a wealthy socialite, embodies this social critique in "Adele's Laughing Song".

OPERATIC SELECTIONS

Soprano Rebecca Gray

“Adele's Laughing Song” (“Mein Herr Marquis”)

from Die Fledermaus

JOHANN STRAUSS II

The aria appears in Act II set during a masked ball. Adele arrives—to the surprise of her sister Ida, a well-known dancer. Ida worries that Adele will be too uncultured to attend the ball, so they decide to present her as a Russian actress named Olga. Although several attendees, including Adele's employer, a banker impersonating a Count, recognize Adele in her disguise, she laughs in the face of their suspicions, forcing her employer to play along with the ruse, for fear of being exposed himself.

“Quando m'en vo” from La Bohème

Giacomo Puccini

The opera *La Bohème* chronicles a group of young Bohemians as they navigate life and love while struggling to make ends meet in 19th-century Paris. The opera follows Rodolfo, Mimì, Marcello, and Musetta as they fall in love, fall apart, and fall ill in this ultimately tragic, but nevertheless beautiful story. In Act II, Mimì, Rodolfo, and their friends have come to Café Momus for a drink. Musetta appears, accompanied by Alcindoro, her rich admirer. Agitated at being ignored by Marcello, Musetta launches into a song, commonly known in English as “Musetta's Waltz”, succeeding in her goal of provoking and seducing Marcello.

“Je veux vivre” from Roméo et Juliette

Charles Gounod

Premiering in 1867, *Roméo et Juliette* is an opera in five acts by Charles Gounod to a French libretto based on *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. Juliette's Waltz Song “Je veux vivre” is sung in the first act. When others speak of marriage to her, Juliette sings that she would like to live inside her dream where it is eternally spring, wishing to stay in this intoxicating dream of youth instead of getting married.

‘T’WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS”,

Bill Holcombe

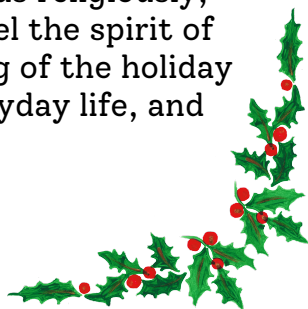
Narrated by Fay Slift



The poem, ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas, originally titled A Visit From St. Nicholas, was first published anonymously on Dec. 23, 1823, in a Troy, New York newspaper called The Sentinel. It wasn't until 1837 that Clement Clarke Moore accepted credit for writing it. Moore is said to have based his vision of Santa Claus on both St. Nicholas and a local Dutch handyman where he lived in New York. Legend has it that the handyman operated the sleigh that took Moore home during the cold winter nights.

The poem is a whimsical and vividly descriptive account of the excitement and anticipation surrounding Christmas Eve. It introduces the iconic character of Santa Claus, describing his arrival on Christmas Eve to deliver presents to children. The poem's opening lines, "‘Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse," have become instantly recognizable. The poem contributed significantly to shaping the modern image of Santa Claus, including his sleigh, reindeer, and jolly, benevolent personality.

This work, plus our programme’s final piece, Christmas Singalong, by John Finnegan, celebrates Christmas tradition, but when seen through the lens of Queer theory, we can be like Clement Moore and embrace our “positionality” despite what is expected of us religiously, culturally, or socially. Use your hearts to feel the spirit of love, peace, and joy that is the true meaning of the holiday season. Be bold, find the magic in your everyday life, and overall be your own fabulous self!



THE NUTCRACKER SUITE, OP. 71A

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was a Russian composer renowned for his Romantic-era contributions to classical music. Born on May 7, 1840, in Votkinsk, Russia, he composed iconic works such as "Swan Lake" and "The Nutcracker." Tchaikovsky's music, blending Russian and Western European influences, is celebrated for its emotional depth.

In 1892, Tchaikovsky crafted The Nutcracker Suite, a condensed version of his ballet "The Nutcracker." This enchanting suite, marked by its mystical ambiance and unique overture, originates from the composer's fascination with creating a sense of mystery and fantasy. In the ballet's narrative, set in Nuremberg on Christmas Eve, Clara receives a nutcracker from the mysterious Drosselmeyer, leading to a magical transformation as the clock strikes midnight.

The ensuing journey takes Clara to the Land of Sweets, ruled by the Sugar Plum Fairy, where various delicacies come to life through characteristic dances. Tchaikovsky's use of melodic tropes reflects different world regions, even as the ballet challenges societal norms. Beyond its captivating storyline, The Nutcracker Suite becomes a vibrant platform for fantasy and wonder, with Clara defying expectations and embarking on international adventures.

Moreover, some interpret Tchaikovsky's creation of this dream world as an exploration of queerness. The ballet, with its inversion of social and gender roles, serves as a metaphor for Clara's courage in following her curiosity. In this fantastical realm, Tchaikovsky may have found a symbolic space to reconcile his own identity as a gay man, presenting a vision of beauty, pleasure, and joy that transcends societal constraints.



The CCO was created in 1984 by musicians playing at the Metropolitan Community Church who wanted a safe, respectful, diverse, and inclusive space for members of the Queer community to rehearse and perform. That vision resulted in the first such orchestra in Toronto, and likely in the world and their mission statement persists 40 years later.

The CCO today has musicians ranging from 17 to 87 years old, and from almost new players to skilled professionals. Its repertoire is primarily classical, with regular sprinklings of other musical genres. The CCO supports young musicians with two scholarships, and Canadian composers with commissions for new works. Its community outreach includes chamber concerts outdoors in Allan Gardens Park, and small ensemble performances.

HOW TO DONATE TO THE CCO:

- (i) by cash or cheque at a concert
- (ii) by mail to Counterpoint Community Orchestra, 20 Bloor Street East, PO Box 75134, Toronto, ON, M4W 3T3
- (iii) through Canada Helps at <https://www.canadahelpsresul.org>.

Donors receive tax receipts for donations over \$20.00 and:

- Name recognition in 3 programmes for \$20 or more
- Plus a CD or an MP3 recording for \$100 or more
- Plus 1 ticket to 3 consecutive concerts for \$500 to \$999 or 2 tickets to 3 consecutive concerts for \$1,000 or more.

Plus, of course, the gratitude of the CCO's members and those who benefit from the existence of this very special organization.

GRATITUDE

Thank you to all our donors for their wonderful support. They help our orchestra thrive! This donor list includes donations we received since 2022 December.

Donor List \$1,000 or More

Frank Lowery
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David Brownstone
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Special Thanks to

The Don Middleton and Clayton Wilson fund
The Estate of John Donat
The Estate of Paul Willis, Bequest for the Concertmaster Chair
The Estate of Uriel Rozen
Addison Tallman
Bill McQueen Scholarship, created by Addison Tallman

CCO Scholarships

Thanks to generous donors, the CCO provides two scholarships for students studying music at the tertiary level in the Greater Toronto Area. Addison Tallman, a former Director, created the Bill McQueen Scholarship Fund in 2019 to be awarded annually for 10 years, in honour of long-standing member, the late Bill McQueen. In 2023, the sitting Directors created the Directors' Scholarship, to be awarded to one student, and to be re-considered for possible further awards by subsequent Boards.

Christmas Sing Along

John Finnegan



Jingle Bells

(Refrain)

Jingle Bells! Jingle Bells! Jingle all the way!

Oh! What fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh!

Jingle Bells! Jingle Bells! Jingle all the way!

Oh! What fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh!

(Verse)

Dashing thro' the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh;

O'er the fields we go, laughing all the way;

Bells on bobtail ring, making spirits bright;

What fun it is to ride and sing A sleighing song tonight! (Oh!)

(Repeat Refrain)

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth receive her King;

Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room, and heav'n and nature sing,

and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,

And heav'n, and heaven and nature sing.

It Came Upon the Might Clear

It came upon the might clear, that glorious song of old,

From angels bending near the earth

To touch their harps of gold;

"Peace on the earth, good will men,

From heav'n's all gracious King;"

The world in solemn stillness lay

To hear the angels sing.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

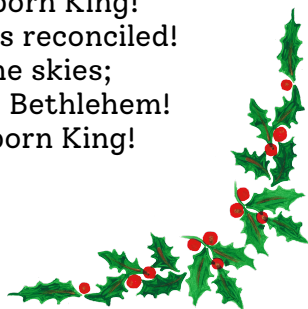
Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!

Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!

Joyful all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;

With th'angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Hark! The herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King!



Christmas Sing Along

John Finnegan



Silent Night

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Away in a Manger

1. Away in a manger, No crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky, Looking down where He lay.
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, The poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, No crying He makes.
I love Thee Lord Jesus, Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle, Till morning is nigh.

Deck the Hall

Deck the hall with boughs of holly, Fa lalalala lalalala
'Tis the season to be holly, Fa lalalala lalalala.
Don we now our gay apparel, Fa lalalalalalala
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, Fa lalalala lalalala.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

1. O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels;

(Refrain)

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord

2. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God in the highest;

(Repeat refrain)



Join us for our next concert

Romantic Echoes

Featuring Flutist, Tetsuya Kobayashi
Date: Saturday, March 23rd, 2024

40th Anniversary Concert *Melodies of Pride and Progress*

LGBTQIA Composer Spotlight
Featuring Violinist, Jaedon Daly
Date: Saturday, June 15th, 2024

For more information visit CCOrchestra.org

