

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



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Concert to celebrate naming of WLU recital hall for Maureen Forrester

Waterloo, Ont. (July 28) — Maureen Forrester, the foremost contralto of our times, will perform at a gala concert at Wilfrid Laurier University on Sunday, Sept. 25 to celebrate the dedication of its highly acclaimed recital hall in her honor.

The afternoon concert will also feature four distinguished alumni of the university and the celebrated Penderecki String Quartet.

The hall is being named the Maureen Forrester Recital Hall in recognition of her significant contributions to the arts in Canada and to the musical world, and for her work on behalf of Laurier.

Ms. Forrester has been heard on five continents as a soloist with almost every major orchestra in the world. She is widely acknowledged as one of the world's greatest Mahler interpreters.

From 1983 to 1988, Ms. Forrester was chair of the Canada Council where she promoted Canadian music and was an advocate for greater funding for the arts. She was made a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1967 and received the Order of Ontario in 1990.

"Maureen Forrester is a great artist and an inspiration to us all," says Lorna Marsden, president of the university. "She has graced Laurier in so many ways."

Laurier's chancellor from 1986 to 1990, Ms. Forrester has been a longtime friend to the university and a part of the evolution of one of Canada's premier music faculties.

Ms. Forrester performed at the inaugural concert of the faculty in 1975 in the Theatre Auditorium and at the opening of the John Aird Centre in 1988. When she received an honorary doctor of laws degree from WLU in 1975, she performed with the Laurier Singers and pianist Raffi Armenian. She has taught masterclasses as part of the faculty's intensive studies program in voice and vocal accompanying.

(More)

Performing at the 3 p.m. concert will be Laurier alumni Theodore Baerg, baritone; Kathleen Brett, soprano; Guy Few, trumpet; and Daniel Lichti, bass-baritone. Also featured will be pianist Leslie De'Ath, a professor of music at Laurier; harpsichordist Beth Ann de Sousa, who is a vocal and opera coach at Laurier; the Penderecki String Quartet, quartet-in-residence at the university; and the Laurier Singers.

The concert program will include music from three centuries, with works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Mahler, Samuel Barber, and Franz Schubert. The dedication ceremony will take place during intermission and a champagne reception will follow the concert.

Proceeds from the concert will be used to establish the Maureen Forrester Music Scholarship Fund to assist outstanding students in the pursuit of their music studies.

The 327-seat recital hall, located in the John Aird Centre on campus, is the primary showcase for concerts and recitals by music students and faculty. It has become a favorite venue for the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Orchestra, Viva Voci, NUMUS, and others.

Designed by Marshall Long Acoustics of Los Angeles, the adjustable acoustics are ideal not only for live concerts, but also for recording performances for rebroadcast. The convex curves of the walls and ceiling, and the bevelled wood panels on the stage promote a rich blending of sounds by eliminating 90-degree angles.

Founded in 1975, the faculty of music at Laurier is recognized as offering one of the finest undergraduate programs for music in Canada. The outstanding performance faculty and the music therapy program — the first in an English language university in Canada — attract students from across Canada. There are currently more than 300 students in the faculty of music.

For more information, tickets, or to make a gift to the scholarship fund, please call (519) 884-0710 ext. 2432.

Note: Ms. Forrester will be available for media interviews in Kitchener-Waterloo on Wednesday, Sept. 14, and in Toronto on Tuesday, Sept. 20. To arrange an interview, contact Julia Ann Easley at (519) 884-0710 ext. 3070. A concert program accompanies this release.