

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



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Forrester calls day most awesome in life as WLU names hall for her

Waterloo, Ont. (Sept. 25) — Maureen Forrester called today "the most awesome day" of her life as Wilfrid Laurier University named its recital hall for her during a gala concert.

"This is the most awesome day of my life," she told the audience of about 300 who rose to their feet when the highly acclaimed hall was officially declared the Maureen Forrester Recital Hall.

"To receive the honor, to have the hall named after me — a little girl who had a year and a half of high school, mind you . . . It's quite something to be attached to such a great university," Ms. Forrester said.

The hall was named for Ms. Forrester in recognition of her significant contributions to the arts in Canada and to the musical world, and for her work on behalf of Laurier as its chancellor from 1986 to 1990.

During the dedication ceremony, Victor Martens, head of Laurier's voice faculty, shared a memory about how Ms. Forrester joined WLU student performers for beer and pretzels after the final performance of *Carmen* with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra in 1972.

"I have always admired Maureen for the human dimension which this simple act exemplified," Martens said. "I find it so fitting that this venue will carry her name since this is not first and foremost a performance space for the elite, but rather for young artists in their formative years."

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The concert concluded with Schubert's *Ständchen* performed by Ms. Forrester and the Laurier Singers, a men's chorus of 20 students conducted by Noel Edison.

"To perform with her is amazing," said chorus member and opera student Joel Rutherford. "The experience and everything she brings to this place is wonderful."

The fundraising concert established the Maureen Forrester Music Scholarship Fund to provide full-tuition scholarships to four students each year. Some donors sponsored seats for the 22 senior music students on the dean's honor roll.

The concert included performances by alumni Theodore Baerg, baritone; Kathleen Brett, soprano; Guy Few, trumpet; and Daniel Lichti, bass-baritone. Also featured were pianist Leslie De'Ath, a professor of music at Laurier; harpsichordist Beth Ann de Sousa, who is a vocal and opera coach at Laurier; and the Penderecki String Quartet. Derek Bampton accompanied Ms. Forrester when she sang selections from Mahler.

Located in the John Aird Centre on campus, the 327-seat recital hall 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.

The faculty of music at Laurier is recognized as offering one of the finest undergraduate programs for music in Canada. The performance faculty and the music therapy program attract students from across Canada. There are currently about 300 .