



**Toronto
Mendelssohn
Choir**

Jean-Sébastien Vallée
Artistic Director



Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

Hear the Passion

Annual Report 2023/24



Message from TMChoir Leadership



As I reflect on the 2023/24 season, I am filled with pride and gratitude for all we achieved. This season celebrated choral artistry and our community through bold collaborations, new works, and the transformative power of music.

We began with *In Time*, a multidisciplinary collaboration with Citadel + Compagnie, blending choral arts with dance. Iconic works like *Carmina Burana* and Verdi's *Requiem* honoured timeless traditions, while premieres by our Composer-in-Residence, Tracy Wong, highlighted contemporary voices. Each performance showcased the versatility and vitality of choral music.

Our enduring partnership with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra remains a cornerstone, enriching our city's cultural landscape. From the joy of *Messiah* to the grandeur of Mahler's Symphony No. 3, bringing virtuosic works to life is a special privilege. We were also honoured to tour three cities with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and Orchestre symphonique de Québec, affirming this choir as one of Canada's finest. We are thrilled to announce that the recording of Jacques Hétu's Symphony No. 5 from this tour is now available.

Community engagement was central to our season, with programs like the Choral Conducting Symposium, and Singsation Saturdays welcoming singers of all abilities. The second annual Exchange Community Choral Festival was a resounding success, bringing together Toronto's dynamic choral community for an inspiring and energizing day of connection and music.

As Artistic Director, it is a privilege to witness the dedication of our choristers, the passion of our audiences, and the generosity of our donors. Together, we ensure choral music continues to inspire and unite.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Sincerely,

Jean-Sébastien Vallée
Artistic Director



Joining Toronto Mendelssohn Choir as it approached its season finale was a remarkable beginning to my tenure. I was privileged to accompany the choir on a tour to Ottawa, where we collaborated with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and Orchestre symphonique de Québec, creating unforgettable musical experiences. In the months since, my focus has been on enhancing organizational efficiencies, strengthening systems, and reengaging with our donors and audiences. As a singer, it has been deeply inspiring to witness the passion, dedication, and artistry of this legendary choir. Working alongside Artistic Director Jean-Sébastien Vallée, whose vision and talent continue to elevate TMChoir's artistic legacy, has been an honour as we shape the future together.

Since its founding in 1894, TMChoir has epitomized choral excellence, earning recognition through accolades like a Juno award and Grammy nomination, and performing at iconic venues worldwide. Yet, at its heart, the choir remains a community—a place of belonging for choristers, audiences, and creators alike. TMChoir's history is interwoven with Toronto's cultural fabric, from performing at Massey Hall's opening to marking Canada's centennial. Today, we are a vibrant institution, expanding our repertoire to embrace contemporary works and reimagining our performances to connect with new generations. This enduring commitment to both artistic excellence and community ensures that TMChoir continues to enrich and inspire, preserving Toronto's cultural heritage while boldly advancing into the 21st century.

Being part of Toronto Mendelssohn Choir's journey is a profoundly meaningful experience, and I am excited to contribute to its continued legacy of artistic brilliance and community impact.

Sincerely,

Daniela Nardi
Executive Director

23/24 Concert Season

The 2023/24 Season marked a milestone for TMChoir with performances at Roy Thomson Hall and Koerner Hall, the continuation of our Composer-in-Residence program, and a broad repertoire reflecting diverse voices. With innovative partnerships and creative collaborations, TMChoir's growth as a choral organisation was evident throughout the season.

The 2023/24 repertoire connected with a wide audience and highlighted local and global perspectives. Notable moments included the premiere of works by Composer-in-Residence Tracy Wong, a multidisciplinary production of *In Time*, and powerful performances of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Verdi's *Requiem*, showcasing TMChoir's commitment to both tradition and innovation.



In Time

September 22 & 23, 2023

Jeanne Lamon Hall (Trinity-St. Paul's Centre)

Jean-Sébastien Vallée, conductor

Toronto Mendelssohn Singers

Compagnie de la Citadelle |

Laurence Lemieux, artistic director and choreographer

Instrumental Ensemble

Audience Attendance: 761



Carmina Burana

October 26 & 27, 2023

Roy Thomson Hall

Jean-Sébastien Vallée, conductor

Geoffrey Sirett, baritone

Lesley Emma Bouza, soprano

Ryan McDonald, countertenor

Toronto Mendelssohn Choir

Toronto Children's Chorus | Zimfira Poloz, artistic director

Members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Audience Attendance: 3,891



Festival of Carols

December 5 & 6, 2023
Yorkminster Park Baptist Church

Jean-Sébastien Vallée, conductor
Jonathan Oldengarm, organ
Toronto Mendelssohn Choir
Toronto Mendelssohn Singers

Audience Attendance: 1,966



Winterreise

March 16, 2024
Jeanne Lamon Hall (Trinity-St. Paul's Centre)

Jean-Sébastien Vallée, conductor
Brett Polegato, baritone
Philip Chiu, piano
Toronto Mendelssohn Singers

Audience Attendance: 441



Verdi's Requiem

April 27 & 30, 2024
George Weston Recital Hall & Koerner Hall

Jean-Sébastien Vallée, conductor
Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野, soprano
Rose Naggar-Tremblay, mezzo-soprano
Andrew Haji, tenor
Geoffrey Sirett, bass
Toronto Mendelssohn Choir
Members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Audience Attendance: 1,629

TSO Concert Collaborations

The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir has proudly partnered with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 1935. Through our collaboration, TMChoir elevates the orchestral experience by adding the power and passion of choral artistry, creating performances that are both musically and emotionally transformative.



Messiah with the TSO

December 17–23, 2023
Roy Thomson Hall

Dame Jane Glover, conductor
Lauren Snouffer, soprano
Krisztina Szabó, mezzo-soprano
Colin Ainsworth, tenor
Joshua Hopkins, baritone
Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Toronto Mendelssohn Choir
Jean-Sébastien Vallée, chorus master



Mahler Symphony No. 3 with the TSO

June 12–15, 2024
Roy Thomson Hall

Gustavo Gimeno, conductor
Gerhild Romberger, alto
Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Members of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir
Jean-Sébastien Vallée, chorus master
Toronto Children's Chorus | Zimfira Poloz, artistic director



“To my ears, the true star of the evening was the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir...this performance was vintage TMC, one of beauty, substance, nuance, and true to the spirit of Handel. Kudos to TMC Artistic Director Jean-Sébastien Vallée, and all the singers for a great job.”

–**Joseph So for La Scena Musicale**
(Messiah, 2023)



On Tour

Hétu Symphony No. 5 with NACO + OSQ

February 28, 2024 – Grand Théâtre de Québec, Québec City
March 2, 2024 – Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto
March 7 & 8, 2024 – Southam Hall, Ottawa

Alexander Shelley, conductor
Kevin Chen, piano
National Arts Centre Orchestra
Orchestre symphonique de Québec
Toronto Mendelssohn Choir
Jean-Sébastien Vallée, chorus master

TMChoir toured with the National Arts Centre Orchestra (NACO) and Orchestre symphonique de Québec (OSQ), performing Jacques Hétu's Symphony No. 5 across Québec City, Ottawa, and Toronto. The collaboration culminated in the release of *Two Orchestras, One Symphony* on November 15, 2024. Under Alexander Shelley's direction, the combined ensembles delivered a powerful interpretation of Hétu's final work, featuring TMChoir's stirring choral performance of Paul Éluard's "Liberté." The live performance included Saint-Saëns's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, showcasing Canadian pianist Kevin Chen's technical brilliance.



"Jean-Sébastien Vallée, the artistic director [of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir], is also one of Canada's finest choral conductors. He has built, again, a huge international and national reputation for excellence. So, it is entirely fitting and in fact incredibly exciting for this project that we are able to collaborate with them."

—**Alexander Shelley**
NAC Orchestra Music Director.

Community & Education Programs

In the 2023/24 Season, TMChoir advanced its mission through impactful educational and community initiatives.

The **Choral Conducting Symposium** welcomed six emerging conductors from Brazil, Belgium, South Korea, and beyond, culminating in a public performance under Jean-Sébastien Vallée. The **Composition Competition** showcased Justin Lapiere's *Lux Aeterna*, a poignant tribute to the victims of the Québec City Mosque attack. This work was performed to an audience of 982 in person and hundreds more online during the May 25, 2024, free community concert.

To enhance chorister skills, we introduced weekly **pre-rehearsal workshops** on vocal technique and diction, led by Music Assistants and Vallée.

Our **Community Engagement** initiatives brought music to new audiences. **Singsation Saturdays** engaged 395 participants, while **pop-up concerts** downtown and at Yonge & St. Clair infused choral music into the city's bustling streets. Our second annual **Exchange**, Community Choral Festival, in partnership with Pax Christi and Orpheus, offered choral workshops that fostered connections and strengthened the GTA's choral community.



Our Community of Support

The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir gratefully acknowledges the support of our government partners, corporate and foundation sponsors, and individual donors who, through their financial support, make it possible for the TMChoir to present outstanding high-quality performances, community engagement programs, and education opportunities. This list reflects donations from September 2022 to the end of the 23/24 season in May 2024.

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Season Sponsors



Legacy Circle

We are grateful to the following individuals who have chosen to support the future of choral music with a legacy gift to Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.

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Conrad Willemse
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Denny Young

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Oscar Avila	David Hallman	Daniel Parkinson	Liz Szonyi
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Susan Evans	Devon Klaas	Youngsin Park	Laura Wood
Nada Farah	Ildikó Kovács	Lisette Pereira	Martha Young
Ellen Farrelly	Dirk LeClaire	Allan Petrie	
Cam Ferguson	Ellen Levine	Marion Plunkett	



Our People in 23/24

Artistic Staff

Jean-Sébastien Vallée
Artistic Director

Tracy Wong
Composer-in-Residence

Irene Gregorio
Collaborative Pianist

Rena Roussin
Musicologist-in-Residence

Paul Genyk-Berezowsky
Musical Assistant

Nicholas Nicolaidis
Musical Assistant

Emily Parker
Musical Assistant

Administration

Daniela Nardi
Executive Director

Anna Kajtár
(Nov 2019 – Aug 2023)
Executive Director

Amy Saffer
(Aug 2020 – Apr 2024)
General Manager

Kathleen Stevenson
Director of Artistic Operations

Sare Thorpe
Administrative Assistant

Lesley Emma Bouza
Community Engagement
Coordinator

Justin Jalea
Community Engagement
Advisor

Paul Genyk-Berezowsky
Music Librarian
(April 2024 – November 2024)

Peter Eratostene
Music Librarian
(April 2023 – Feb 2024.)

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Design

Laura Wills

The Choristers of 23/24

Soprano

Catherine Alberti	Rayna Crandlemire *	Gabrysia Kowalik	Michelle Murphy
Tia Andriani	Jane Fingler *	Clara Krausse	Emily Parker *
Ann-Marie Barrett-Tandy	Kim Finkelstein	Alysha Ladha	Michele Pearson
Jocelyn Belfer	Leslie Finlay	Elizabeth Lee	Ariane Prescott
Lesley Emma Bouza *	Maria Farrier (Jan-June 2024)	Jisue Lee	Michelle Prunier
Louise Boyden	Rebecca Fisher	Nai Lee	Mary Ridgley
Leslie Bradshaw	Shayna Follington	Alice Liu	Sylvia Romanowska
Marlo Burks (Jan-June 2024)	Marina Galeano	Claire Luc	Heather Rowe
Bree Callahan	Rebecca Genge *	Jocelyne Lussier	Hannah Silverberg
Hannah Carty	Alison Haines	Marlene Lynds	Jaclyn Siou
Ada Chan	Leslie Higgins *	Sachiko Marshall	Chong Tan
Joanne Chapin *	Pat M. Irwin	Lindsay McIntyre *	Sinéad White *
Amy Chen	Christine Kerr	Rebecca McKay *	Jennie Worden
Lauren Choi	Jennifer Kim	Cathy Minnaar	Sophya Yumakulov
		Olha Movsessionian	

Alto

Jane Agosta	Kirsten Fielding *	Ryan McDonald	Jan Szot
Marlo Alcock	Ruxandra Filip	Heather McGrath	Joscelyn Olivia Tan
Renée Ardiente	Gillian Grant	Jennifer McGraw	Jennifer Ujimoto
Julia Barber *	Ann Griffin	Bethany Jo Mikelait	Kiley Venables
Mary Bella *	Nora Guncz (Jan-June 2024)	Sarah Mole *	Anika Venkatesh *
Frances Chan	Simon Honeyman	Matthew Muggeridge	Patti Vipond
Eunseong Cho	Svitlana Ivashchenko (Jan-June 2024)	Susan E. Mumford	Emma Willemsma
Rebecca Claborn *	Joaquin Justo	Annie Odum	Tarquin Wongkee
Nina Coutinho	Valeria Kondrashov *	Parnian Parvin	Susan Worthington
Kristin Crawford	Claudia Lemcke *	Lyndsay Promane *	Jessica Wright *
Avis Devine	Rebecca Manga	Pamela Psarianos	Virginia Wright
James Dyck *		Alison Roy *	Yuyang Wu
Adrienne Eastwood		Yara Rubb	

Tenor

Mitch Aldrich *	Ryan Doyle *	Valdis Jevtejevs *	Daniel Meeks
Rafael Avila	Omar Flores	Lucas Jin (Jan-June 2024)	Nicholas Nicolaidis *
Tom Bishop	John Gladwell	Clement Kam	Neil Payne
Matthew Boutda *	Nick Gough *	Benjamin Keast *	David Serber
Sam Broverman	Nathan Gritter *	Hassan Khan	Sharang Sharma *
Thomas Burton *	Alejandro Guerrero	Robert Kinar *	Peteris Spels
Karel Cantelar Ramos	Shane Hanson *	Francis Lam	Terrence Tsang
Jerome Chang *	Channing Huang	Eric Lee	Michael Vasmer
Michael Clipperton	Charles Im	Allen Mahabir *	Christopher Wenman
Peter DeRoche	Justin Jalea *	Tim McPhail	

Bass

Neil Aronoff *	Michael Harrison (Jan-June 2024)	Frederick Mei	Karl Tomczak
Jeffrey Baker	Kieran Kane *	David Peer	Chia-An (Victor) Tung
Hernan Botero (Sept-Dec 2023)	Tim Khoo (Jan-June 2024)	David B. Powell	Sean van Wyk
David Chan	John Lemke (Jan-June 2024)	Milovan Prelevic	Jonah Wall
Yoosik Choi	Kai Leung *	Michael Qin	Paul Winkelmanns *
Tony Churchill	Matt Lozinski	Graham Robinson *	Albert Wong
Peter Eratostene (Sept 2023-March 2024)	Alan Macdonald *	Jordan Scholl *	Isaiah Yankech
Steven Foster	Rocco Marciano	Seymour Stern	Michael York *
Paul Genyk-Berezowsky *	Joseph McGowan IV	Gavriel Rhys Swayze	David Yung *
Andrew Gilchrist	Magnus Mee	David Tillmann (Jan-June 2024)	Bruce Yungblut

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