SYMPHONY
NOVA SCOTIA

# SYMPHONY NOVA SCOTIA 2023/24 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

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# INTRODUCTION

**Symphony Nova Scotia takes pride in sharing a wide range of musical programs with communities across the province. Throughout the 2023/24 concert season, we continued to expand accessibility and create new opportunities for everyone to share in the rich musical traditions of our communities.**

Music appreciation is a lifelong endeavour and contributing to arts education and participation for people from all walks of life in Nova Scotia is a key mandate for the Symphony. Each season, Nova Scotians gather in new and sometimes unexpected places to experience our live performances beyond the traditional concert hall. These concerts aim to captivate new audiences, while expanding our reach outside of Halifax.

Our province benefits from a rich diversity of cultural communities, including Black, Indigenous, Acadian, Gaelic, and newcomers among others. We are committed to inclusion of diverse populations in our programming and performances, ensuring that a wide spectrum of voices is represented in orchestral music.

In 2023/24, we shared free and low-barrier education and outreach programs with approximately 11,000 attendees over 60 performances and activities.

## SYMPHONY WEEK
### SEPTEMBER 10–17, 2023

In 2023/24, Symphony Nova Scotia celebrated our 16th annual Symphony Week of free performances throughout our region in public spaces including Alderney Landing Theatre in Dartmouth and the Halifax Stanfield International Airport. Hour-long concerts were performed on September 10, 12, and 14, 2023 to upwards of 700 individuals, families, and seniors.

This week is a chance for our orchestra to get up close and personal with audiences with free, general admission concerts to showcase works from the upcoming season. Highlights included music from Dinuk Wijeratne, Louise Farrenc, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, along with a live performance from local guest artist Reeny Smith.

2023 was also the first year the Symphony was invited to participate in Beat Beethoven, a unique 7.5K race in which runners try to "beat" Beethoven to the finish line, completing their race before the Symphony stops playing. While poor weather forced the race to be cancelled, the Symphony was delighted to perform with Jah'Mila at the Cunard Centre for the runners.

# MUSIC FOR EVERYONE

## PROVINCIAL TOUR
### OCTOBER 13–20, 2023

For the first time since 2007, Symphony Nova Scotia brought an inspiring symphonic experience to over 2,700 people in communities around the province thanks to our tour sponsor, Wilsons Security.

The program featured music by Louise Farrenc, one of France's greatest 19th-century composers; Haydn's expressive and spirited Cello Concerto in C Major, performed by Nova Scotia's own world-renowned cellist, Denise Djokic; Dinuk Wijeratne's *Yatra*, a work we co-commissioned with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra to celebrate Canada's sesquicentennial; and a new composition for our 40th anniversary from Symphony bassoonist and composer L. Christopher Palmer.

Symphony Nova Scotia brought our first Spotlight concert of the season to five communities across the province: Amherst, Antigonish, Lunenburg, Wolfville, and Yarmouth. We also shared education and outreach activities with these five communities plus New Glasgow, which included school concerts, performances in seniors' residences, masterclasses with Mount Allison University students, and band workshops. In upcoming seasons, we look forward to reaching music-loving audiences in northern parts of Nova Scotia as well, including communities in Cape Breton.

## FAMILY SERIES

Our free Family Series, sponsored by TD Bank Group, benefited from $25,000 in foundation support in 2023/24, plus 113 community donations totalling $1,846. These delightful performances combined with interactive learning from our orchestra provided audiences with six engaging, high-spirited, hour-long performances at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax and Alderney Landing Theatre in Dartmouth.

## SONGS & DANCES OF MI'KMA'KI
### JANUARY 13 & 14, 2024

Symphony Nova Scotia's Artist in Residence & Community Ambassador Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser curated and conducted this program as a joyful exploration of Mi'kmaw, Acadian/French, and Celtic music. As always, these programs are designed to be participatory and informal, and children were invited to express themselves through movement by dancing to the music. We were glad to see approximately 850 residents attend over the two performances.

## MOON OVER HALIFAX
### FEBRUARY 17 & 18, 2024

Guest conductor Naomi Woo, joining us as part of Tapestry Opera's Women in Musical Leadership program, led the orchestra through a celebration of winter traditions around the world. Enthusiastic audiences of over 950 people were treated to musical favourites by Antonio Vivaldi, Émile Waldteufel's joyful *Skaters Waltz*, and music celebrating the Lunar New Year. This festive winter celebration was a perfect way to keep warm.

## IT'S EASY TO BE GREEN
### APRIL 20 & 21, 2024

Nova Scotians live in one of the most beautiful of Canada's provinces and on April 22, worldwide, we celebrate Earth Day to encourage greater appreciation for the environment's importance. This concert featured uplifting music inspired by nature with guest conductor Jennifer Tung, who joined us in partnership with Tapestry Opera's Women in Musical Leadership program. The two concerts were attended by 900 audience members.

# MUSIC FOR EVERYONE

## LIBRARY SERIES

The popular Library Players returned to local libraries in April and May 2024. The first program featured host and Principal Bass Max Kasper and Principal Viola Susan Sayle in a concert about composers who played the viola. This program visited libraries in Bedford, Clayton Park, and Cole Harbour. The second Library Series program featured host Max Kasper plus Symphony Assistant Concertmaster Jennifer Jones and violinists Anita Gao-Lee and Yi Lee. This program featured music by "rebel" composers, and was performed at libraries in Halifax, Tantallon, and Dartmouth.

## CLASSICAL MUNCHKINS

Symphony Nova Scotia musicians connect with preschoolers to have fun exploring music with instruments, games, and interactive activities. Our Classical Munchkins programs are free and offered in community spaces throughout the region such as the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and local libraries. In 2023/24, we offered three Classical Munchkins performances in November to audiences at libraries in Hubbards, Bedford, and Upper Tantallon featuring Symphony musicians Yvonne DeRoller, Christine Feierabend, Mary Lee, and Aiden Russell.

## SENIORS' CONCERTS

Thanks to the support of Parkland Retirement Living, we brought chamber ensembles to three seniors' residences in 2023/24. Symphony Nova Scotia Principal Viola Susan Sayle and Principal Second Violin Isabelle Fournier performed music for audiences at three Shannex locations: Parkland Clayton Park, Parkland at the Gardens, and Parkland at the Lakes. We were also pleased to provide seniors in area residences complimentary access to our Digital Series livestreams.

## DIGITAL SERIES LIVESTREAMED CONCERTS

Sponsored by Parkland Retirement Living and private donors, the Symphony is proud to offer livestreamed concerts in our Digital Series. These concerts, which can be viewed from the comfort of home, offer accessible, online viewing options for audiences across Nova Scotia and beyond. 2023/24 livestreams included Bernhard Conducts Beethoven & Mahler (November 16, 2023), Beethoven Piano Concertos with Jon Kimura Parker, Part 2 (March 22, 2024) and Holly Conducts Ravel & Debussy (April 18, 2024). We are grateful to everyone who shared in the joy of our live performances across the globe.

# LEARNING & EXPLORING

## REDGE CRAIG MEMORIAL WORKSHOPS

Redge Craig Memorial Workshops are generously supported by Jason Roth and Cheryl Steadman-Roth through the Education & Diversity Outreach (EDO) Fund. These free, interactive, instrumental workshops are held annually at a Nova Scotia school in memory of Redge Craig, a social worker and mentor to many. Their goal is to connect the Symphony's orchestra members with aspiring young musicians, particularly those who may not otherwise have the opportunity to learn from a professional mentor. These workshops were supplemented by 13% of the EDO Fund and $6,500 in individual donations.

## THE LULLABY PROJECT

This Carnegie Hall Weill Music Institute program pairs pregnant and new parents with professional artists to write and sing personal lullabies for their babies – supporting parental health, aiding childhood development, and strengthening the bond between parent and child. In 2023/24, Freya Milliken and Lindsay Ward composed *The World is Yours* and Sarah McInnis and Holly Poell composed *Snapshot Lullaby* for local Nova Scotian families.

## LINK UP

Symphony Nova Scotia is one of more than 80 national and international organizations chosen to present this program in collaboration with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute. Link Up is a highly participatory program inviting students to learn about orchestral repertoire through a yearlong, hands-on music curriculum. In 2023/24, 700 students and teachers participated from eight different elementary schools across the South Shore, Annapolis Valley, and Halifax Regional School Boards. The culminating concert in conjunction with the full orchestra was performed on April 3, 2024 at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium under the direction of education conductor Gary Ewer. Three student soloists from the Fountain School of Performing Arts were also featured on this concert. Link Up benefits from a series of benefactors that includes 25% of the EDO Fund adding up to $12,500.

## ADEL & IMELDA DARWISH DIVERSITY OUTREACH

These programs are generously supported by Jason Roth and Cheryl Steadman-Roth through the EDO Fund, established in memory of Adel and Imelda Darwish within the Symphony Nova Scotia Foundation. Every May through June, Symphony musicians head to different schools in communities throughout the region to present chamber concerts. In 2023/24, musicians performed for eight different schools in communities including New Germany, Dutch Settlement, Windsor, and North Preston. Principal Flute Casey Granofsky, Principal Oboe Danielle Johannes, Principal Clarinet Timothy Yung, Principal Bassoon Gabe Azzie, and hornist Mary Lee performed Prokofiev's ever-popular *Peter and the Wolf* with Assistant Principal Bass Jemma Jones narrating at six different schools across the region. The group also performed *Umoja* (which means "unity" in Swahili) by American composer Valerie Coleman. Concertmaster Renaud Lapierre, violinist Ken Nogami, violist Yvonne DeRoller, and cellist Hilary Brown also performed small ensemble concerts for two regional schools. Since 2015, these rural school programs have inspired thousands of students across the province with the joy of orchestral music. Adel & Imelda Darwish Diversity Outreach is supported by 17% of the EOD Fund equalling $8,500.

# LEARNING & EXPLORING

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERTS, REHEARSALS, & MATINEES

The Symphony's Young People's Concerts, Open Rehearsals, and Student Matinees are supported by Jason Roth and Cheryl Steadman-Roth through the EDO Fund. In 2023/24, the 45-minute school program "Music Gives Us Courage" offered students an opportunity to experience a full orchestra in a fun and engaging concert with music from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to Uptown Funk. New this year, we invited students to enjoy the Symphony at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium for our school concerts. Open dress rehearsals offer the chance for students in grades 4 and up to watch and listen to the Symphony prepare for a concert at the Rebecca Cohn. This year, we hosted three open rehearsals: Denise Djokic Plays Haydn (October 12), Lucas Porter Plays Gershwin (February 29), and Reeny & the Symphony (May 10). These rehearsals are offered at a reduced price for school groups, and we were pleased to see upwards of 1,500 students attend, including home-schoolers and university students. We also shared our student matinee of *The Nutcracker* with almost 900 attendees. $22,500 from the EDO Fund (around 45%) goes to strengthening these concerts that have been the starting point for many Nova Scotian musicians over the years.

## VOLUNTEER 40

This program celebrated our 40th anniversary by offering 40 tickets per concert to share the gift of music with volunteers from the following local non-profits: Alzheimer Society Nova Scotia, Atlantic International Film Festival, Brigadoon Village, Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, Canadian Red Cross, Crohn's & Colitis Canada, Halifax Public Libraries, Hospice Halifax, Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia, IWK Health Centre, Make-A-Wish, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Parker Street Food & Furniture Bank, Phoenix Youth Programs, Ronald McDonald House Charities Atlantic, Shelter Movers, and YMCA of Greater Halifax & Dartmouth.

## ONLINE LEARNING

Online access is an important part of our outreach strategy and continues to be one of the most popular channels for our outreach activities. Check us out on YouTube where you can view Pre-Concert Chat, Symphony 101, and Meet the Instrument videos, plus Fusion Sessions concerts with popular local artists and more: YouTube.com/SymphonyNovaScotia

## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

180 individual donors supported education and outreach activities with gifts this season. We're also pleased to acknowledge the following:

- Symphony Nova Scotia Foundation
- Jason Roth & Cheryl Steadman-Roth
- The Estate of William & Corinne Hopgood
- The Craig Foundation
- Women for Music

Symphony Nova Scotia's programs and performances take place in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

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