

## **Gordon Gerrard Biography**

### **Piano / Conductor**

For Canadian conductor Gordon Gerrard, music serves as a kind of animating life force. He relishes the making of it. Takes pleasure in how it brings joy and comfort to audiences. Appreciates its potential to change how people perceive the non-musical aspects of their lives.

The recently appointed Artistic Director of City Opera Vancouver, he's guest-conducted major Canadian orchestras (Vancouver, Quebec, Toronto, Victoria, London, Kitchener-Waterloo) and opera companies (Calgary, Hamilton, Edmonton). He loves working with emerging artists – at Calgary Opera, the Atelier Lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal, the Banff Centre, Opera Nuova (Edmonton), UBC Opera (Vancouver), Opera McGill (Montréal) and the Glenn Gould School (Toronto). And since 2016, he's delved into orchestral classics, contemporary works and programming that explores social change and community engagement as the dynamic leader of the Regina Symphony Orchestra.

All rather unlikely for a kid who grew up on a farm just outside Brandon, MB. There was music in the house – Mom played the piano, Dad listened to old-time country music, Grandma led the choir at the little church in the nearest town.

Gordon started piano lessons at seven and developed quickly. Before long he was setting his alarm for 6 am so he could practice before catching the school bus.

There wasn't much chance of hearing live classical music in rural Manitoba, but there were cassette tapes of popular works by the "great composers" and he burned through a Reader's Digest Compilation of the greatest hits for piano.

By high school he was obsessed with music and decided to pursue it professionally.

At 17 Gordon left the farm for his undergrad at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. There he discovered the joy of collaborating with singers, which led to a fascination with opera and the world of conducting.

"There's this sort of dance that you do with the singers," he says. "Sometimes you lead, sometimes you follow, and almost never do you articulate who's doing which at any given time. I love it."

As an orchestral conductor, he's indebted to his mentor, the late Bramwell Tovey. When Gordon began as assistant conductor with the Vancouver Symphony in 2012, he'd never conducted a single movement of a Beethoven symphony. Bramwell helped him hone his skills and showed him how to be a leader, on and off the podium.

He's thrilled to be taking the lead with City Opera Vancouver, a company with a reputation for developing brand new work. Gordon plans to expand that vision to include chamber operas from the baroque era to contemporary pieces and everything in between.

"I'm excited to discover all the places we can go," he says. "There's an audience here with a thirst for exploring music and theatre that ventures outside the standard repertoire."

"Music brings people together. I really do believe that as time goes on, what we need is more togetherness, more community. I consider it a privilege to be part of that magic."