

Simon MacDonald

Upper Strings

Simon MacDonald began playing the violin at age seven, here in Victoria, British Columbia. Following studies with Frona Colquhoun and Sydney Humphreys, Simon earned his AVCM Teacher and Performance Diploma from the VCM, Bachelor's degree from New England Conservatory in Boston, and Master's degree from the Schulich School of Music, at the University of McGill, in Montreal. Simon's musical education also included performing at music festivals in Europe and North America, including Schleswig Holstein Music Festival (Germany), The Festival of Two Worlds (Italy), the Spoleto Festival (Charleston, South Carolina), Tanglewood Music Festival and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (Massachusetts), and at ArtSpring Festival on Salt Spring Island.

After graduating from McGill in 1998, Simon moved to New Orleans to take a job in the violin section of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra for the 1998/99 season. In 1999 he returned to Canada to accept a position in the first violin section of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and quickly became an active musician on the Canadian Prairies and across Canada. As well as performing with WSO, Simon was a teacher, chamber musician, and soloist. He was a member of the 1st violin section of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Principal Second violin of the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, a member of the Rembrandt String Quartet, and a regular guest with the Brandon Chamber Players and the new music ensemble GroundSwell. In 2013 he was invited to be guest concertmaster of the Regina Symphony Orchestra and assumed the position full time in 2015. Included in his duties as concertmaster, Simon regularly performed concerti with the Regina Symphony, and as co-curator of the Regina Symphony Chamber Players, Simon initiated the first complete cycle of Beethoven quartets to the city of Regina, as well as a wide selection of new music from many Canadian composers.

Teaching has always been an important part of Simon's musical life; he maintained a private studio in Winnipeg, and regularly coached the Winnipeg Youth Orchestras and University of Manitoba Symphony Orchestra. He continued that dedication after moving to Regina, maintaining a private studio, and coaching the South Saskatchewan Youth Orchestra, while regularly returning to be a guest artist and clinician for the Winnipeg Youth Orchestras.

Simon has been faculty at Rosamunde Summer Music Academy (Winnipeg), Regina Summer Strings (Regina), Cadenza Summer Strings (Winkler), the University of Manitoba Preparatory Division Summer Chamber Camp (Winnipeg), the Brandon Summer Suzuki Institute, and the International Music Camp at the Peace Gardens. For the 2010/2011 academic year Simon was the sabbatical replacement for Professor Kerry DuWors at the Brandon University School of Music. In 2016, Simon was invited as guest artist for the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra's 30th anniversary season; that same year he was also guest artist and clinician at the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts, and at the prestigious Hale School, in Perth, Australia.

Simon also enjoys a departure from the classical genre; he has acted as concertmaster for various theatre productions including *The King and I*, the Broadway Touring production of *Chicago*, and a memorable moment performing while tethered to a roof top on stage for the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. He also acted as roady and fiddle player for the touring blues group *BluesWater*, on Islay, in Scotland, during the Festival of Music and Malt in 2014.