

2019



Media Kit



THE MAPLE LEAF SINGERS

Fact Sheet



HISTORY

- The Maple Leaf Singers (MLS) originated in 1968 with 24 members under the creative leadership of New Westminster couple George and Marie Gillis
- In 2001, George and Marie Gillis retired after leading the group for 33 years
- From 2001 to June 2018, Wilson Fowlie led the MLS as Music Director
- In September 2018, Rob Gillis became Musical Director
- In 2018, the Maple Leaf Singers celebrated their 50th Anniversary
- The MLS, based in Burnaby, BC, comprises over 50 voices singing six-part harmony

MISSION

- Mission Statement: To sing, have fun, and share our joy of music with others
- The Maple Leaf Singers is a registered charity dedicated to bringing music to groups at minimal cost

MUSIC STYLE

- Varied repertoire of pop, jazz/blues, rock, classical, gospel, and Broadway show tunes
- Complement music with choreography, dance, and props
- Memorize all music

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

- Perform over 12 shows a year throughout the Greater Vancouver Area
- Sing at community centres, churches, seniors' homes, conventions, fundraisers, special events
- Invite public to attend Annual Spring Show comprising two performances at the end of May at Massey Theatre in New Westminster

MEDIA CONTACTS

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The Maple Leaf Singers Bring Music to Life!



In an uncertain world, the Maple Leaf Singers sing out a positively uplifting message! Known for high-energy, choreographed performances, the Maple Leaf Singers deliver a repertoire that runs the gamut from Broadway and movie musicals to rock and pop, classical, folk, and gospel.

Listed by the New Westminister Record as a must-see show, the Maple Leaf Singers Annual Spring Show at Massey Theatre routinely promises good vibes that span the decades.

The Maple Leaf Singers have come a long way since they sang their first notes together in 1968 under the creative leadership of New Westminister couple George and Marie Gillis. After celebrating 50 years of fabulous shows in May 2018, they launched their 2018/2019 season under dynamic new director Rob Gillis, son of the founding couple. Carrying on the family legacy, Rob says, “I’m thrilled to be part of this talented group of performers. The dedication, the energy at every rehearsal, every show, leaves me excited for the next, and our audiences let us know that they feel the same.”

As a registered charity, the Maple Leaf Singers strive to include music in as many lives as possible at minimal cost. Their regular performance schedule includes shows at community centres, churches, seniors’ residences, fundraising events, and special events all over the Greater Vancouver Area (GVA), along with several Christmas shows. Each May, they mount two performances of their Annual Spring Show at Massey Theatre in New Westminister. The show includes special acts—solos, duets, and quartets—developed especially for that performance.

The Spring Show is the lifeblood of the Maple Leaf Singers’ performing schedule. Funds raised enable the chorus to offer minimal-cost performances to its appreciative audiences. Ticket proceeds help cover ongoing costs of rehearsal location rentals, performance risers, sound equipment, musical scores, and costumes, as well as a dedicated Maple Leaf Singers truck that transports everything to performance locations.

To those who have enjoyed the Maple Leaf Singers before or those who have yet to have the pleasure, the group promises to get memories stirring, blood pumping, and feet itching to move. This chorus knows how to bring life to music and music to life.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- 1968: George and Marie Gillis establish the Maple Leaf Singers
- 1971: First Annual Spring Show; James Cowan Theatre in Burnaby
- 1973: Official choir for Canada Summer Games, New Westminster
- 1973: Karen Magnussen's birthday, The Coliseum, Vancouver
- 1974: Grey Cup game, Empire Stadium, Vancouver
- 1977: Tribute to the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver
- 1977: New Westminster Silver Jubilee Celebration, Massey Theatre, New Westminster
- 1978: Royal Visit by Prince Phillip and Prince Andrew – salute to Captain Cook, Burnaby
- 1984: 125th Anniversary of the City of New Westminster
- 1985: Gala Italian Night, Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver
- 1986: Expo 86, Best of B.C. Talent, B.C. pavilion, Vancouver
- 1991: Music '91, BC Tel Centennial Community Showcase Road Show, Victoria
- 1992: Okanagan Tour
- 2001: George and Marie Gillis retire after 33 years, Wilson Fowlie becomes Music Director
- 2006: Salute to Troops in Afghanistan, Massey Theatre, New Westminster
- 2007: Lutheran Urban Mission Society, Downtown Eastside fundraiser
- 2008: The Maple Leaf Singers 40th Anniversary
- 2008: Lutheran Urban Mission Society; Downtown Eastside fundraiser
- 2010: Vancouver Paralympic Games
- 2014/2015/2016: Canada Day Celebrations Burnaby Village, New Westminster, Port Coquitlam
- 2018: The Maple Leaf Singers 50th Anniversary–longest standing member of the British Columbia Choral Federation

- 2018: Wilson Fowlie retires; Rob Gillis become Music Director



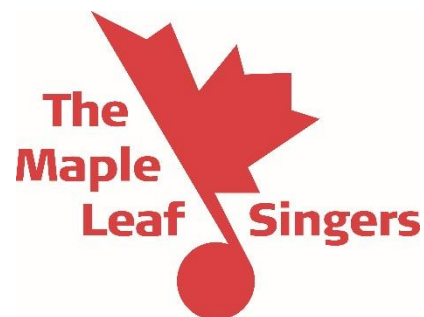
The Maple Leaf Singers
50 YEARS





ARTISTIC TEAM

MUSIC DIRECTOR – ROB GILLIS



Son of Maple Leaf Singers' founders George and Marie Gillis, Rob Gillis has grown up with music in his blood. He played percussion for the chorus starting at just eight years old and has been singing and playing in bands since the age of 10. As a founding member of Vancouver band Blue Meenies, Rob sang and played bass guitar for over 25 years.

In 2007, Rob and his wife Josie joined the Maple Leaf Singers as full-time singing members, taking on various duties including executive and managerial positions. Rob became Assistant Director in 2017 and took on the role of Music Director following Wilson Fowlie's retirement at the 50th Anniversary show in 2018.

As a longtime advocate for superior senior living, Rob blends that passion with music, often arranging for the Maple Leaf Singers to provide their theatre quality entertainment to those unable to go out to a live performance.

ACCOMPANIST – GAIL MACDONALD

A Vancouver native, Gail MacDonald graduated from John Oliver High School and received her Bachelor of Music degree and Teacher Certification from UBC. She has been a Music and ELL Specialist Teacher for over 40 years, working with students ranging from Kindergarten to Adult Education. She now teaches part-time.



As a chorister, Gail has performed locally, nationally, and internationally. She is a former Director of the Burnaby District Children's Choir and currently directs Andante, the Burnaby Retired Teachers Choir.

A member of the Maple Leaf Singers since 1998, Gail enjoys singing and accompanying our varied repertoire. In 2015, she received the Joyce O. Maguire Award from the BC Choral Federation for outstanding long-term service as a choral accompanist.

ASSISTANT ACCOMPANIST – MARILYN RUSHTON

For Marilyn Rushton, music is like a second language. She began playing piano at the age of five. Throughout her school years, she sang in school choirs and in a girls' quartet. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from UBC in 1975.

Marilyn sang on radio jingles and worked in piano bars for nearly 15 years before taking on the role of co-director of the Burnaby Children's Choir from the late 1980s to 2000.

Marilyn received a Bachelor of Music Education degree from UBC in 2000 and joined the Maple Leaf Singers in 2001. She completed a Master's Degree in Special Education in 2002. Until retiring in June 2019, she was a vision teacher with the Vancouver School District and regularly incorporated music into her students' programs. Marilyn also directs a performance choir for blind and partially-sighted singers.





Q & A

How are the Maple Leaf Singers different from other choirs?

We describe ourselves as a uniquely entertaining show chorus, since we offer more than the traditional choir presentation. To mount a dynamic performance, we memorize all our music so that we can complement the energy of the music with choreography. We also continually update our costumes.

You sing in six-part harmony. What does that mean?

Our group comprises men and women, so we can cover the full choral range from first and second soprano, and alto, through tenor, bass, and baritone voices.

Who belongs to the Maple Leaf Singers?

About 55 voices make up the Maple Leaf Singers currently, with members of all ages.

Where and how often do you practice?

We practice once a week, on Mondays in Burnaby. We add a Thursday practice as we get closer to our Christmas performance schedule and our annual May show.

How do you become a member?

All are welcome to audition. Call 778-245-4445 or email joinus@mapleleavesingers.com to make arrangements. Learn more about the Maple Leaf Singers at www.mapleleavesingers.com

What are some of the special events that you have been involved with?

The Maple Leaf Singers recorded music for the 2010 Paralympics Opening Ceremonies. We also helped celebrate the 150th birthdays for New Westminster and for British Columbia and we've sung at Canada Day celebrations around the GVA.

The Maple Leaf Singers performed a *Salute to Troops in Afghanistan* show at Massey Theatre and two shows for the *Lutheran Urban Mission Society* to raise funds for the Downtown Eastside. We've sung at a Grey Cup Game, were the official choir at a Canada Summer Games, and participated in Expo '86.

In 2018, we celebrated our 50th Anniversary.



CONTACT INFO

GENERAL INFORMATION

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EVENTS COORDINATION & CONCERT BOOKINGS

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