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## **COC'S SECOND ANNUAL ENSEMBLE STUDIO COMPETITION TO TAKE PLACE NOVEMBER 29, 2012**

**Toronto** – The **Canadian Opera Company** hosts its second annual **Ensemble Studio Competition** on **November 29, 2012** in the intimate **Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre** at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts**. The Ensemble Studio Competition is the final round of national auditions for the **COC Ensemble Studio**, Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals. On November 29, Canada's finest young opera singers will compete in front of a public audience for four cash prizes and the offer of a coveted position in the 2013/2014 Ensemble Studio.

This is a must-see event for all who are invested in and intrigued by the future of opera in Canada. An exclusive insiders' experience, the Ensemble Studio Competition opens up a behind-the-scenes audition process and introduces the stars of tomorrow well before they step onto the COC stage. The audience at the vocal competition will hear the singers selected to follow in the footsteps of such renowned Ensemble Studio graduates as Ben Heppner, Isabel Bayrakdarian, Joseph Kaiser, Wendy Nielsen and John Fanning, among many others.

"Many of today's biggest opera stars received a vital launch to their careers through the support, exposure and influence provided by a major competition," says **COC General Director Alexander Neef**. "The Canadian Opera Company is dedicated to nurturing young Canadian artists, and vocal competitions such as the Ensemble Studio Competition are essential in discovering, assisting, promoting, and developing young performers."

The annual COC Ensemble Studio audition process, open only to Canadian citizens and permanent residents, takes COC administrators across Canada and into the U.S. for preliminary auditions in Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto and New York. The COC Ensemble Studio Competition is the final round of auditions, with finalists performing in front of a public audience and COC adjudicators, who deliberate on location and announce the prize winners at the conclusion of the event. At the sold-out inaugural Ensemble Studio Competition in 2011, four singers – **Sasha Djhanian, Claire de Sévigné, Owen McCausland** and **Cameron McPhail** – were selected out of 10 finalists to join the 2012/2013 Ensemble Studio.

A limited number of tickets to the second annual Ensemble Studio Competition go on sale on **November 1, 2012**. Tickets will range in price from **\$15 – \$40** and be available for purchase online at **coc.ca**, by calling COC Ticket Services at **416-363-8231**, or in person at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts Box Office**, located at 145 Queen St. W., Monday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The COC Ensemble Studio Competition is presented in part by the Estate of Horst Dantz and Don Quick and RBC Foundation.

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### About the Ensemble Studio

The members of the Ensemble Studio are the COC's resident artists and are important ambassadors for the company. Since its inception in 1980, over 150 young professional Canadian singers, opera coaches, stage directors and conductors have acquired their first major professional operatic experience through the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio. Former members include Ben Heppner, Isabel Bayrakdarian, John Fanning, Wendy Nielsen, David Pomeroy, Joseph Kaiser, Lauren Segal and Krisztina Szabó.

Members of the Ensemble Studio receive a blend of advanced study and practical experience through an individually tailored, multi-year program, involving understudying and performing mainstage roles, intensive vocal coaching, language and acting studies, and career skills development, as well as participation in masterclasses with internationally renowned opera professionals.

About the Canadian Opera Company

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience support-base and one of the highest attendance and subscription rates in North America. Under its leadership team of General Director Alexander Neef and Music Director Johannes Debus, the COC is increasingly capturing the opera world's attention. The COC maintains its international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation by creating new productions within its diverse repertoire, collaborating with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracting the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The COC performs in its own opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. Designed by Diamond and Schmitt Architects, the Four Seasons Centre opened in 2006, and is also the performance venue for The National Ballet of Canada. For more information on the Canadian Opera Company, please visit its award-winning website, [coc.ca](http://coc.ca).

- 30 -

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