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COC ANNOUNCES 2011/2012 SEASON OF POPULAR FREE CONCERT SERIES



“With its clear-glass walls, [the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre] brings together indoors and out, music and street life, listeners and passersby. Its aesthetic welcome is as strong as its mandate, to connect people with music that is unpretentious, top quality – and free.” (*Toronto Star*)

Toronto – The **Canadian Opera Company** kicks off the 2011/2012 season of its wildly popular **Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre** on **Sept. 20, 2011 at 12 p.m.** The series opens with annual audience favourite *Meet the Young Artists*, featuring the rising stars of the Canadian Opera Company’s **Ensemble Studio** in a program of their favourite operatic arias. Inaugurated in 2006, the 10-month festival of concerts and dance events attracts 15,000 people annually to the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts**, showcasing hundreds of artists from Canada and around the world.

The sixth season of the **Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre** runs from late September 2011 to early June 2012 with performances on Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon and some Wednesdays at noon or 5:30 p.m. Tickets are distributed at the door 30 minutes prior to the performance on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to availability.

Artists of the highest calibre, both established and emerging, are presented in six series of diverse artistic programming running throughout the season:

VOCAL

Some of the biggest names in opera participate in 19 noon-hour recitals throughout the season including several artists of the COC mainstage: sopranos **Erin Wall**, **Julie Makerov**, and **Ekaterina Sadovnikova**; mezzo-soprano **Krisztina Szabó**; baritone **Russell Braun** and bass **Robert Pomakov**. The young artists of the **COC Ensemble Studio** present a variety of programs, including a performance of the vocal music of **Kaija Saariaho**, hosted by the composer herself. The series also features students from the **University of Toronto’s Faculty of Music and Opera Division**, artists of **Atelier lyrique de l’Opéra de Montréal**, a presentation of Ana Sokolovic’s critically-acclaimed *Svadba – Wedding* by **Queen of Puddings Music Theatre in Concert**, and the launch of the **Canadian Art Song Project** under the direction of distinguished Ensemble Studio alumnae **Lawrence Wiliford** and **Steven Philcox**.

CHAMBER

For the first time in the history of the Free Concert Series, the **Canadian Opera Company Orchestra** is presented in a mini-festival of four concerts featuring its members in various combinations, curated by COC music director **Johannes Debus**. Rounding out the series of 21 concerts are some of the most notable local and international artists and ensembles including the **New Orford String Quartet**, which features the concertmasters of both the Toronto and Montreal symphony orchestras, the **Zodiac Trio**, **ArrayMusic**, ensembles of **The Glenn Gould School**, **Trio Arkel**, the **TSO Adopt-A-Player** program, and artists from the 2012 **Toronto Summer Music Festival**. Continuing the celebration of Kaija Saariaho, **Soundstreams Canada** presents a performance of the composer's chamber, vocal and choral works featuring soprano **Carla Huhtanen** and the **Elmer Iseler Singers**.

PIANO VIRTUOSO

Nine concerts boast an astonishing wealth of talent from Canada and around the globe, including students of the prestigious Glenn Gould School of The Royal Conservatory of Music and prizewinners of several highly esteemed national and international competitions. These recitals offer opportunities to hear some of the nation's most exciting rising stars, including **Alexander Serezenko**, **Lucas Porter**, **Scott MacIsaac**, and **Christopher Mokrzewski**, as well as talented young artists from around the world including **Ryan MacEvoy McCullough** (U.S.), **Alejandro Vela** (Mexico), **Hiroko Kudo** (Japan), and **Mehdi Ghazi** (Algeria).

JAZZ

The 11 concerts in this series offer performances by some of Toronto's jazz legends as well as the stars of tomorrow, with repertoire spanning the spectrum from jazz standards to cutting-edge original compositions. Whether you prefer intimate duos or spirited *a cappella* groups, spicy Latin dance tunes or swinging quartets, there's something for every jazz fan including the duos of **Robi Botos/Hilario Durán**, **Robi Botos/Bill McBirnie**, **Julie Michels/Kevin Barrett**, **Don Thompson/Guido Basso**, **Sophia Perlman/Adrean Farrugia**, **Lauren Margison/Christopher Mokrzewski**, and **Nancy Walker/Bruce Cassidy**. Ensembles include the **Heather Bambrick Quartet**, **Humber Studio Jazz Ensemble**, **Cadence** vocal quartet, and the **Adi Braun Quartet**.

DANCE

In collaboration with Dance Ontario and DanceWorks, this electrifying program of eight events brings some of the most dynamic members of Toronto's dance community into an equally dynamic space to perform against the backdrop of the bustling urban streetscape. Programs range from the traditional and contemporary Chinese dance of **Little Pear Garden** to the Spanish flair of the **International Flamenco Festival**, the popping and locking of **Bboyizm**'s breakdancing, the modern Indian expression of **Ipsita Nova Dance Projects**, and the awe-inspiring new choreography of **Ballet Jörgen**.

WORLD MUSIC

The most diverse of all the series, the eight world music programs deliver sounds and rhythms from across the globe, ranging from Japan to Bulgaria and Italy to Venezuela. Programs feature the Mediterranean melodies of multiple Juno-nominated world music artist **Pavlo**, the heart-pounding beats of taiko ensemble **Nagata Shachu**, the southern Italian sounds of the **Vesuvius Ensemble**, the tango stylings of **Ensemble Vivant** with special guest bassist **Dave Young**, Canada's Latin queen **Eliana Cuevas** and her trio, the newly-formed **Humber Mexican Jazz Project**, folk master banjoist **Jayme Stone**, and the klezmer rhythms of **The Yiddish Swingtet**.

For a full calendar of events, please visit coc.ca.

The Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre is a focal point of the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room in the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, with its striking glass wall allowing for natural lighting and a view of University Avenue. Linking Ring 3 and Ring 4, the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre provides seating for 100 patrons. Additional seating and standing locations on the walkway and the upper floor are also available.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre is supported by the Free Concert Series Endowment Fund established in honour of Richard Bradshaw by an anonymous donor.

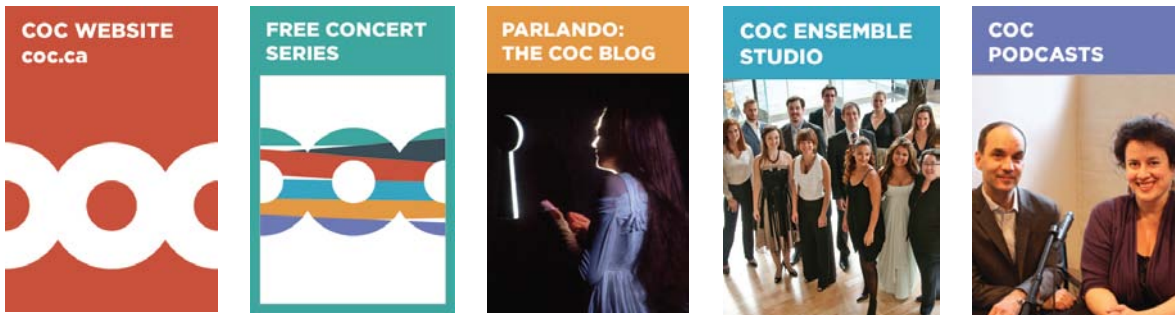
About the Canadian Opera Company

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the five largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience support-base and one of the highest attendance and subscription rates in North America. The COC celebrates its 62nd anniversary during the 2011/2012 season. 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 COC, visit its award-winning website, coc.ca.

Photo credits:

(l-r) Alejandro Vela, Photo: Karen Reeves; City Dance Corps, Photo: Mike Brassard; Wen Zhao, Photo: Chris Hutcheson; Christopher Enns, Photo: Chris Hutcheson

INTERACTIVE LINKS



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