

For immediate release: Sept. 8, 2011

## **CANADIAN BREAKTHROUGH DANCE-POP BAND AUSTRA ADDS TO INSPIRATIONAL SETTING OF *OPERANATION 8: A MUSE BALL***

### **Gala Event Tickets Now On Sale**

**Toronto** – Canadian breakthrough band **Austra** has joined the entertainment lineup for the **Canadian Opera Company**'s annual fundraising party, *Operanation 8: A Muse Ball*. One of the hottest new dance-pop bands in the world, **Austra** will play to the event's young philanthropic set at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts on **Oct. 21, 2011**, with a crowd of more than 1,000 anticipated to attend. **Austra** joins Canadian superstar **Rufus Wainwright** as the featured musical guests at *Operanation 8*, the must-attend arts fundraiser of the fall social season.

Fitting with the event's thematic thread of the "muse," **Austra** could be considered a muse all its own, inspiring many with the fast-rising success of their debut album, "Feel It Break," released earlier this year. The trio – vocalist **Katie Stelmanis**, drummer **Maya Postepski** and bassist **Dorian Wolf** – has quickly gained recognition, regularly selling out concerts in Canada and abroad, with music they describe as suitable for both ritual incantations and clubs. The sound of "Feel It Break" hearkens back to the sleazier side of New Wave while still being deeply rooted in Stelmanis's classical and operatic upbringing.

This confluence of classical and electronic has been at the heart of Stelmanis's career before there even was a career. She joined the Canadian Children's Opera Company at age 10, sang for the COC, and even pursued a career in opera before joining a band. She's been described by *The Guardian* as a "classically trained musician with a tendency to use her mainly electronic compositions for neo-operatic flights of vocal fancy."

Vocal fancy is indeed what it will be when **Austra** collaborates with soprano **Ambur Braid** and baritone **Adrian Kramer**, two rising opera stars from the COC's Ensemble Studio, in a special performance at *Operanation 8*. Braid truly rocked the ball with her performance at last year's (2010) *Operanation 7, Cinderella: Rock the Ball*, featuring a rock/opera mash-up with Broken Social Scene, a moment many are still referencing. She's continued to generate buzz as a singer to watch with head-turning performances in last season's *The Magic Flute* and *Orfeo ed Euridice*. While a first time performer at *Operanation*, Kramer is familiar to many through his mainstage work with the COC, most recently delighting audiences with his comedic turn as Papageno in *The Magic Flute*.

Add **Austra**, **Braid** and **Kramer** to the mix with the "greatest songwriter on the planet," as Elton John has dubbed **Rufus Wainwright** – the previously announced headliner for *Operanation 8* – and what else could you need for a fully entertaining evening? But there's more, with the promise of inspired fashion creations and an art installation by notable designers and visual artists, still to be announced.

Tickets to this magical night of dancing, rousing live entertainment and specialty food and drink are **\$150** per person, and are now on sale at **coc.ca** or by calling COC Ticket Services at **416-363-8231**.

***Operanation 8: A Muse Ball*** is well-positioned to be the most talked-about event of the fall season. Already, the ***Operanation 8*** VIP dinner (held in the Four Seasons Centre's spectacular Henry N. R. Jackman Lounge with tickets priced at \$500 per person) is 90% sold out, putting the just-released gala party tickets in even higher demand. All proceeds of ***Operanation 8*** go to the COC Ensemble Studio, Canada's premiere training program for young opera professionals.

Since its launch in 2005, the COC's *Operanation* event has become the hottest fundraiser of the year, bringing together thousands of young urban professionals from diverse career, social and business circles who share a passion for the arts.

**Presenting Sponsor for *Operanation 8: A Muse Ball*: TD Bank Group**

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For more information and for media accreditation to attend *Operanation 8*, please contact:  
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For more information on the COC and Ensemble Studio members Ambur Braid and Adrian Kramer, please contact: Jennifer Pugsley, COC Media Relations Manager, tel: 416-306-2303, e-mail: [jenniferp@coc.ca](mailto:jenniferp@coc.ca)