

PRESS RELEASE
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Canadian Art Song Project Commissions Ana Sokolović to Compose New Song Cycle for 2017

Toronto, January 20, 2014 - Canadian Art Song Project (CASP) is pleased to announce that it has commissioned Montreal-based composer Ana Sokolović to write a new song cycle as part of its ongoing commitment to new art song. CASP is a registered charity committed to unearthing, reinventing, performing and recording Canadian poetry in song. The Sokolović commission is the seventh commission to come from CASP since its founding in 2011 by tenor Lawrence Wiliford and pianist Steven Philcox, and the most significant to date in terms of size and scope.

In Toronto Sokolović is most widely known for her long collaboration with Queen of Puddings Music Theatre for which her opera *Svadba-Wedding*, commissioned and produced by the company in 2012, received six nominations for the Dora Mavor Moore Awards and won for Outstanding New Musical/Opera. In 2013 the company toured the opera in Europe and the US where it received wide critical acclaim.

The new work by Sokolović for CASP is being composed for piano and a quartet of singers from the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio, Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals. The world premiere of the song cycle will be presented through the COC's Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto as part of the opera company's celebration of Canada's sesquicentennial anniversary in 2017.

For CASP's co-artistic directors, Lawrence Wiliford and Steven Philcox, the collaboration with Ms. Sokolović represents an important step for the organization. **"To date the works that Canadian Art Song Project has commissioned have primarily involved composers based in southern Ontario, but it has always been our intention to expand our work across the country and involve artists who can reflect the breadth of the Canadian experience. The sesquicentennial anniversary of Canada's confederation is an ideal occasion to make this a reality,"** says co-artistic director Lawrence Wiliford.

CASP co-artistic director Steven Philcox adds, **"The cycle we have commissioned from Ana is a work that will give voice to a wide range of Canadian perspectives, such as language, geography, and time – and we could not imagine a more exciting composer for this kind of project."**

In response to receiving the commission from Canadian Art Song Project, Ana Sokolović says: **“I feel so privileged for the exceptional opportunity to create a work in celebration of Canada for CASP. After having composed several vocal works, including three operas, I delight in the possibility of writing art song, where I will be able to explore the voice in a more intimate way.”**

“I am very pleased that an organization like the Canadian Art Song Project, which so avidly supports Canadian talent through its commissioning and presentation programme, will be bringing Ms. Sokolović’s creation to the COC’s Ensemble Studio for current members to perform,” says Canadian Opera Company General Director Alexander Neef. **“As alumni of the Ensemble Studio, Steven and Lawrence continue to serve as wonderful ambassadors, and their work with CASP speaks volumes of their passion and commitment. I very much look forward to seeing the project come to life.”**

Liz Upchurch, the head of the Canadian Opera Company’s Ensemble Studio, views the collaboration between CASP and the young artists of the COC as a wonderful opportunity: **“I believe Ana to be one of the most innovative and important composers in Canada today. I am thrilled at the prospect of this collaboration and eager to see what inspirational vocal art she will tailor make for the Ensemble Studio.”**

Currently teaching composition at the Université de Montréal, Ana Sokolović has won a numerous awards for her work, including the SOCAN Jan V. Matejcek Award, the Canada Council for the Arts Joseph S. Stauffer Prize, the National Arts Centre Award and the Prix Opus for composer of the year from the Conseil québécois de la musique. In addition, the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ) recently marked the 20th anniversary of Ana Sokolović’s arrival in Quebec with a celebration of her body of work during the 2011-12 season.

In addition to this new song cycle from Sokolović, previous works commissioned by CASP include *Sewing the Earthworm* (2011) by Brian Harman, *Cloud Light* (2012) by Norbert Palej, *Extreme Positions* and *Birefringence* (2013) by Brian Current, and *Moths* (2013) by James Rolfe. Other commissions that have been announced and are currently in development include new works by Peter Tiefenbach (2014) and Marjan Mozetich (2014).

Funding for these new works is made possible through public and private granting agencies as well as private donors. Tax-deductible donations can be made through the Canadian Art Song Project website at www.canadianartsongproject.ca.

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