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## **SUPERHEROES AND FAIRY TALES OF OPERATIC PROPORTIONS ENGAGE YOUNG AUDIENCES ACROSS ONTARIO THIS FALL**

**Toronto** – From **November 9 to December 6, 2015**, the **Canadian Opera Company's** annual **Glencore Ensemble Studio School Tour** gives 16,000 elementary students across Ontario the chance to experience live opera performed by professional opera singers. This year's tour features two engaging productions, *Operation Superpower* and *The Bremen Town Musicians*, which will capture the imaginations of young audience members with their superhero and fairy tale themes.

"We are incredibly proud that for over 30 years the COC has been able to introduce thousands of young people to opera through the company's annual school tours," says **COC General Director Alexander Neef**. "For many students, the **Glencore Ensemble Studio School Tour** is their first exposure to the operatic art form or live performance of any kind. It is our hope that these early experiences will help create a new generation of opera fans."

*Operation Superpower* and *The Bremen Town Musicians* are both staged by rising star Canadian director and Ensemble Studio graduate **Ashlie Corcoran**, and feature sets and costumes by multi-Dora Award-winning designer **Camellia Koo**. A new production intended for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, *Operation Superpower* is an interactive adventure that takes students on an unforgettable quest to discover their own inner superhero. *The Bremen Town Musicians*, based on a timeless tale by the Brothers Grimm, returns to the school tour this year after delighting audiences in 2014 and is ideal for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6.

Both operas will be presented to the public on **Saturday, November 14, 2015** at the **Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre** (227 Front St. E., Toronto). Before each performance, audience members are invited to participate in hands-on activities related to the operas. Tickets to each opera are **\$15 for adults** and **\$10 for children**, and may be purchased at [coc.ca/OperaForFamilies](http://coc.ca/OperaForFamilies) or by calling COC Ticket Services at **416-363-8231**.

*Operation Superpower* and *The Bremen Town Musicians* are each 45 minutes in length and are performed in English, making them easily accessible for younger audiences. Each performance concludes with a 15-minute question-and-answer period with the cast and crew. These annual touring productions feature the rising young stars of the **COC Ensemble Studio**, Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals.

**A complete 2015 Glencore Ensemble Studio School Tour schedule is available upon request. The COC welcomes media coverage of school performances. Photographers and writers must advise the COC's media relations team 48 hours before the performance of their attendance at the in-school presentation. The COC must advise the school before any media can attend. This is a legal requirement.**

### **Operation Superpower by Armand Ranjbaran, Tobias Greenhalgh and John Brancy**

*Operation Superpower* was originally created by three graduates of The Juilliard School: **Armand Ranjbaran, Tobias Greenhalgh and John Brancy**. An interactive show from start to finish, the opera empowers students to identify their own strengths and character traits, or "superpowers," and encourages them to nurture these powers and use them to help others. This new COC production will also travel to Sudbury for four performances.

## **Creative Team**

**Director:** Ashlie Corcoran

**Music Director:** Jennifer Szeto

**Set and Costume Designer:** Camellia Koo

**Stage Manager:** Lesley Abarquez

**Superhero #1:** Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure

**Superhero #2:** Erica Iris

**Superhero #3:** Aaron Sheppard

## **The Bremen Town Musicians by Dean Burry**

Based on a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm, *The Bremen Town Musicians* is by acclaimed Canadian composer **Dean Burry** and was originally commissioned by Ottawa's Opera Lyra in 2009. The opera tells the story of a donkey, a dog, a cat and a rooster who embark on a journey to find freedom and start a new life after being mistreated by their owners. This COC production was last performed in 2014.

## **Creative Team**

**Director:** Ashlie Corcoran

**Associate Director:** Alison Wong

**Music Director:** Hyejin Kwon

**Set and Costume Designer:** Camellia Koo

**Stage Manager:** Michael Barrs

**Donkey:** Iain MacNeil

**Dog:** Charlotte Burrage

**Cat:** Aviva Fortunata

**Rooster:** Andrew Haji/Charles Sy

**Robber (and others):** Jan Vaculik

## **Acknowledgements**

**Glencore:** Title sponsor of the Glencore Ensemble Studio School Tour

The 2015 Glencore Ensemble Studio School Tour is booked through the COC's arts education and touring partner, **Prologue to the Performing Arts**.

**The COC Ensemble Studio, underwritten in part by Peter M. Deeb, RBC Foundation and The Slaughter Family Foundation, is Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals and provides advanced instruction, hands-on experience, and career development opportunities. The Ensemble Studio is also supported by the Government of Canada, the Hal Jackman Foundation and other generous donors.**

## **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 Schmitt Architects, the Four Seasons Centre opened in 2006. For more information on the COC, visit its award-winning website, [coc.ca](http://coc.ca).

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For more information or to request photographs of the school tour productions, please contact:

Kristin McKinnon, Assistant Publicist, tel: 416-306-2383, e-mail: [kmckinnon@coc.ca](mailto:kmckinnon@coc.ca)

Jennifer Pugsley, Media Relations Manager, tel: 416-306-2303, e-mail: [jenniferp@coc.ca](mailto:jenniferp@coc.ca)