



The Canadian Opera Company presents *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Brian Galliford as the Dancing Master in the Welsh National Opera production, 2004. Photo: Clive Barda
Cover: The Canadian Opera Company presents *Cinderella*. Earle Patriarco as Dandini in the Houston Grand Opera production, 2007. Photo: Brett Coomer



Prelude

SPRING 2011 | VOLUME 18 | NUMBER 3

ELS COMEDIANTS STAGE *CINDERELLA*



AN INTERVIEW WITH
ARIADNE'S JANE ARCHIBALD

DIRECTOR ROBERT CARSEN
ON *ORFEO ED EURIDICE*

THE COC BOARD
PASSION, PURPOSE, PRIDE

Prelude

A gift to our friends

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses To:
Canadian Opera Company
227 Front St. E., Toronto, ON, Canada M5A 1E8
t 416-363-6671 f 416-363-5584 e info@coc.ca w coc.ca

Editorial Board:
Robert Lamb, *Managing Director*
Roberto Mauro, *Artistic Administrator*
Jeremy Elbourne, *Director of Marketing*
Claudine Domingue, *Director of Public Relations*
Christie Darville, *Director of Individual Giving*

Editors: Suzanne Vanstone, *Senior Communications Manager, Editorial*
Gianna Wichelow, *Senior Communications Manager, Creative*

Design: Endeavour



WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

MESSAGE FROM GENERAL DIRECTOR ALEXANDER NEEF

As I write this message, the COC has just returned from an extremely successful run of our production of Robert Lepage’s creation, *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*, at the prestigious Brooklyn Academy of Music. This marks the second time in our history that we have been invited to BAM. New York audiences, who have not seen the COC in almost 18 years, were once again entranced by the work our marvellous company can produce.

The accolades from New York are extremely gratifying because, for me, the trip highlighted what the COC can achieve when we collaborate with artists and companies of extremely high calibre. By bringing the best artists and organizations together and giving them the opportunity to work at the top of their ability, the results can be, and often are, pure magic. When I came to the COC, it was my mission to take the company to the next level of accomplishment, a level exemplified by our internationally renowned opera house. I hope that some of that work is already visible on our stage.

Readers of my blog know I have mentioned a few Canadian and international artists who will be coming here to perform for you. To that list, I add a few more: Gerald Finley, Ben Heppner, Adrienne Pieczonka, Ferruccio Furlanetto, Christine Brewer, Ramón Vargas, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Joshua Hopkins, Peter Sellars, Jiří Bělohlávek, Dmitri Tcherniakov and David Daniels. In addition, future seasons will bring productions that we share with, among others, English National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro Real (Madrid), Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, New York City Opera, Teatro alla Scala and Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

Great artists and companies can only really be appreciated once they have been experienced,



Photo: Michael Cooper

and the opportunity to see some of the world’s most celebrated artists in our own city has never been better. This is the time of year when we stress the importance of subscription renewal because consistent subscription levels give us the stability to commit to the kind of artists and projects that bring us closer to our aspirations.

We truly hope our appreciation for your support is obvious every time the curtain goes up!

2011/2012 - SOMETHING FAMILIAR, SOMETHING NEW

Four operas by three of history’s greatest melody-makers
Four Canadian Opera Company premieres led by incredible Canadian and international artists

RENEWAL DEADLINE - APRIL 30

NEW PRODUCTION SUPPORT IS KEY TO COC’S SUCCESS

This March, at the invitation of the world-renowned Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), the COC performed the U.S. premiere of its spectacular production of Robert Lepage’s *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*. Co-produced with Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Opéra national de Lyon, and Netherlands Opera, in collaboration with Ex Machina (Québec), this opera is a unique and fascinating production that completely transforms the traditional presentation of the art form.

“Magic, pure and complex... Johannes Debus conducts the Toronto forces with elegant swagger... Call it a triumph. ★★★★★”
Martin Bernheimer, *Financial Times*

This tour would not have been possible without the most generous support from both the government and private sectors. On opening night, this group of private underwriters, who made possible, in part, this COC tour at BAM, joined together with Alexander Neef, Johannes Debus and the Nightingale, Olga Peretyatko. They gathered to celebrate the tremendous honour of touring to BAM, which further underlines the international acclaim that the COC receives for its continued artistic excellence.

In keeping with our mandate of advancing the art of opera in Canada and abroad, the COC is planning to stage a minimum of two new productions each season, over the next decade. This will build a Canadian inventory of the most important operatic repertoire including the most popular pieces by Mozart, Verdi, and Puccini.

“When its [chorus] members simultaneously opened up their Chinese robes to reveal hitherto hidden puppets, it was pure magic – and the show was full of these moments of childlike wonder.”
Elisabeth Vincentelli, *New York Post*

Commitments towards production underwriting, artist sponsorship or performance sponsorship, play a significant role in making possible these major works. In turn, it allows the company to benefit from rental and revival opportunities as we enhance our repertoire with an aim to partner with peer Canadian institutions to improve national production standards together.



Meredith Arwady as Death and Ilya Bannik as the Emperor in the COC’s *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Photo: © 2011 Jack Vartoogian/FrontRowPhotos

“The Canadian Opera Company’s Orchestra and Chorus were vibrantly conducted by its accomplished young music director, Johannes Debus.”
Anthony Tommasini, *New York Times*

We are most grateful to those who have stepped forward to participate in the COC’s ambitious plans to date, and look forward to new and continued partnerships as we lay the foundation of artistic programming for generations to come. ■

To learn more about potential sponsorship opportunities, please contact Christie Darville at **416-306-2375** or via e-mail at **christied@coc.ca**.



The Canadian Opera Company presents *Cinderella*. (l – r) Catherine Cook as Tisbe, Joyce DiDonato as Cenerentola and Tamara Wilson as Clorinda in the Houston Grand Opera production, 2007. Photo: Brett Coomer

SPANISH TREASURES

By **RAMÓN JACQUES**

On January 27, 2007, Houston Grand Opera unveiled a new production of Gioacchino Rossini’s comic masterpiece *La Cenerentola*, based on the Cinderella story. The new staging was conceived by one of the world’s freshest and most inventive arts groups – Els Comediants of Barcelona, Spain.

Els Comediants is hard to define because it doesn’t fit any pre-existing moulds. The no-holds-barred group established by Joan Font in 1971 is composed of actors, musicians and artists who will perform anywhere, from a street corner to an opera hall. While Els Comediants is primarily known as a theatre company, it also creates festival projects, recordings, books, films,

wardrobe materials, educational materials, television series and – of course – opera. Whatever the media, Els Comediants delivers imagination and fantasy.

Els Comediants embraces all forms of communication, “speaking” through mime, clowns and puppets to reach audiences of all ages. The company says it draws inspiration from symbols, myths and rituals and sees its productions as much more than theatrical or musical events. It aims to awaken audience members to the celebratory spirit shared by humankind and our connection to nature.

Els Comediants productions have been seen all over the world, and the company has taken part in many Catalan and Spanish

celebrations as well as the Expo fairs in Seville, Lisbon, Hanover, Zaragoza (in 2008), and in Japan, and in many festivals in Latin America, Europe, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Australia and China. In the U.S., the company’s work was first seen in 1991 at the New York Theatre Festival. The group participated in the 1998 Chicago International Theatre Festival, and it returned to Chicago to take part in the Goodman’s 2006 Latino Theatre Festival where it performed the North American premiere of *Las mil y una noches* (1001 Nights), a unique theatrical piece that mixes stories from *The Arabian Nights* with fantasy to expose the atrocities of destruction in a demolished library in Baghdad. Els

Comediants received worldwide exposure and is still remembered for its appearance in the closing ceremonies of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.

Even though Rossini’s *La Cenerentola* in Houston marked Els Comediants’ U.S. opera debut, this is not the group’s first foray into the art form. Els Comediants was first introduced to opera in 1999 when Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona asked Joan Font (pronounced joh-AHN fohnt) to direct Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, a production that has since been performed all over Spain, thus beginning a strong and successful relationship between the two companies. Later came *The Small Magic Flute*, an adaptation of the opera for young audiences; another Gran Teatre del Liceu production, Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*, was staged at the Peralada Festival in Spain. Els Comediants performed Tomás Bretón’s zarzuela *La verbena de la Paloma* in 2004 at the Granada Music and Dance Festival, and *D’opera* – a play created by Els Comediants with fragments from different famous operas – has introduced many young people to opera.

This production of *La Cenerentola* did not originate with Houston Grand Opera, but, through an interesting turn of events, HGO had the honour of being the first of four co-producing companies to stage it. Given Els Comediants’ history with Gran Teatre del Liceu, it isn’t surprising that the production was initiated by the Barcelona company a few years ago. Immediately, HGO General Director Anthony Freud, who was then at the helm of Welsh National Opera, indicated an interest in joining the project as a

co-producer, and WNO was in fact scheduled to be the first company to stage it. Grand Théâtre de Genève had also joined as a co-producer when David Gockley, then the general director of HGO, indicated the company would like to be co-producer, but he requested that HGO be the first to stage it because of artist availability issues. The other co-producers agreed and it was scheduled for Houston – just in time for Anthony Freud, who is now the HGO’s general director, to mount the production. *La Cenerentola* then travelled to the other theatres and made its debut in Barcelona in 2008.

What drew Els Comediants to this project? “I was attracted to the story because it is a fairy tale, and I’ve always liked magical stories that deal with transformations, fiction and dreams,” said Joan Font in a telephone interview. “The story is a myth about a poor and humble young woman who has the dream of being rescued by a prince; that is why we wanted to create a story in which the fairy tale and the opera become reality.



The Canadian Opera Company presents *Cinderella*. Joyce DiDonato as Cenerentola and Patrick Carfizzi as Don Magnifico in the Houston Grand Opera production, 2007. Photo: Brett Coomer

“It is set in an indefinite place and time,” Font continued. “It is like a comic book of coloured cartoons that captures the happiness in Rossini’s music. A philosopher [Alidoro] invites Cinderella to a ball and that is where the transformation and her dream actually materialize. She transforms into a princess and her poor home into a palace. The staging contains very few elements: some chairs, furniture, a divan, a throne in the shape of a horse, a mirror, a carriage and some mice that take part in the transformation.”

The production is visually attractive because it captures the lights and colours – white, red, blue, green – of the Mediterranean. Stage lighting plays an important role. What the audience can expect to see is a romantic comedy that extols the senses at different levels: comic, romantic, realistic, absurd and ironic, all intertwined.

“It is a beautiful production,” Font sums up. The rest he leaves to the operagoer to experience live at the theatre. ■

Ramón Jacques is an opera critic who contributes frequently to *Opera Actual* (Barcelona, Spain) and *Pro-Opera* (Mexico City). He also writes for the websites of La Opera Del Buen Ayre (Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Mundo Clasico (A Coruña, Spain). This article originated with Houston Grand Opera, 2007, reprinted with permission.

For further insights into *Cinderella*, please read the article “Master of Sublime” by Patrick Summers in the spring house program.

RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION NOW and pay in Four Easy Instalments **WITH ONLY 25% DOWN. RENEWAL DEADLINE APRIL 30.**

THE COC BOARD

PASSION, PURPOSE, PRIDE

By SUZANNE VANSTONE

As in most organizations, artistic or otherwise, the COC has a large boardroom with a long table where board members and COC management gather monthly, and various sub-committees meet at other times. What happens around that table is, of course, important. But what happens between those meetings is crucial. An arts organization cannot stay healthy and vibrant without the support and stable underpinnings of its board. And the COC is privileged to have the unflagging support of a superior board.

I recently spoke with four board members: Paul Spafford – Past President and current Chair; David Ferguson – Past President and Past Chair; Douglas Ludwig – retired; and, Trinity Jackman – new board member.

Paul is Vice Chairman of CIBC World Markets Inc. and had a somewhat circuitous route to the COC starting with his involvement at the National Ballet. That is until his friend and colleague Tom Woods (a current board member) invited him to attend the opera. “I love music and Tom warned me I wasn’t allowed to hum!” Despite that difficult restriction, Paul ended up purchasing a COC subscription and attended for many years. Then several friends and colleagues who had an association with the COC led him further to his decision to sit on the board – Jim Black, George Taylor and Rob Collins. Paul adds, “And Richard [Bradshaw] and I became good pals – we enjoyed our Scotch and cigars! I respected him and we appreciated each other’s company.”

As a member of the Nominating Committee, Paul discusses the main functions of a board and its members. “First and foremost, they should be promoters of the organization. And I think any management wants them to be a sounding board for strategy and direction. Yes, there is a governance aspect to it. But in the case of our board, we have

a collection of individuals who are senior enough, sophisticated enough, and involved enough in business or in professional careers that the governance aspect of it is largely second nature. So we don’t ask how we are supposed to govern. We ask where are we going, how are we doing, what are the problems, and how can we help.

“And help can mean financial support, relationships with other people, other organizations, governments, etc. Take the building of the opera house. We had people who were in real estate development projects, had constructed buildings, and put their own money on the line. That’s why we came in on-time and on-budget.

“The prime thing for a board director is that they have a passion for either the company or for opera – hopefully, both. You do it because you’re a fan of the organization and what it does. If you’re not passionate about it, it’s like another job. And who needs another job?!”

As with so many patrons, an artistic highlight for Paul was the *Ring Cycle*. He admits, “I didn’t think I had enough passion for 16 and a half hours of opera! But I was glued to my seat. And although I had the flu during *Götterdämmerung*, I was bound and determined that I was not going to miss it. I sat in the back row of the box, close to the door, and I made it through the whole thing. I didn’t even know what the *Ring Cycle* was beforehand.



David Ferguson and Paul Spafford

The COC thanks retiring members Walter Bowen QC, Frank Ciccolini Sr., Douglas L. Ludwig and William Morneau, and welcomes new members Marcia Lewis Brown, Trinity Jackman, Sandra Simpson and Philip S. W. Smith.

But you couldn’t *not* like it. The music – that’s what did it for me. The orchestra was unbelievable.”

For David Ferguson, Executive Managing Director and CFO of BMO Capital Markets, his love of music started at an early age. “I’ve been a lifelong fan of classical music and of opera, and I grew up in a family where my grandfather used to sit and listen to *Saturday Afternoon at the Opera* in Winnipeg in the earliest days of those broadcasts. My mother was a very fine classical musician, and passed on a love of classical music and of opera which I’ve had since I was a teenager. So when it came time in my life and career to choose to do something in the community, the appeal of getting involved with the COC was immediate.

“Originally I made inquiries to see if I could get involved in a committee of some sort. Margo Bindhardt was the president at the time and she said ‘No, forget the committees, you’re coming on the board!’ Within a year or so, I was appointed chairman of the Finance and Operating Committee. I was almost through my first year as president when Richard died, August 15, 2007. Suddenly my level of involvement went from modest to extreme.

“We were all terribly saddened by Richard’s death but the company still had momentum and a bright future. Once we gathered ourselves after the shock, we had to find a replacement. I chaired that Search Committee and it gave me an opportunity to contribute to the company in a very meaningful way, at a very critical juncture.”

David also addresses the “job” of our board members. “We are a fundraising board – that’s our primary objective. If you are personally passionate about the art form and about the company itself, you are much more effective as a fundraiser. So we need directors who are personally generous, well-connected or employed by



Karen Rice and Doug Ludwig



(l – r) Angela Graham (The Power Plant), Consuelo Jackman , Trinity Jackman, Sarah Bywater (Sick Kids Leaders)

organizations that are very supportive of the arts, have personal resources or access to people or foundations that do, and that can speak with passion.”

Some of his highlights over the years? “*War and Peace*. The *Ring*. I loved *Bluebeard’s Castle/ Erwartung*. That was one of the greatest nights of theatre that I have ever experienced – absolutely brilliant. I also have a particular fondness for *The Flying Dutchman*. I love the music and it’s been slightly different each time we’ve done it.”

Doug Ludwig, Chief Financial Officer of Baha Mar, Cable Beach Resorts, came to the COC Board through his association with our naming donor for the new opera house, the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. “I had developed a great interest in opera probably in the preceding three or four years before joining the board,” Doug says. “It had grown through my daughters, because they were performing with the Canadian Children’s Opera Company (CCOC) and they were fortunate enough to be in, between the two of them, about eight different productions, everything from *Tosca* to *Boris Godunov*. So naturally I went to see them.

“I can’t believe I had not been introduced to opera prior to that. I remember seeing almost all of the *Tosca* performances and by the end, my wife Karen and I were hooked. When I joined the board, I was absolutely astounded at the members’ talent and commitment. I’ve never been around an organization that’s so passionate about what they do and how they do it. It was a real honour to be amongst those people and to contribute in every way possible. After I left the Four Seasons, I had to relinquish my board seat there to another person, but Richard called and said, “I would really like you to stay on the COC Board.” So I continued on.

“Not every board member, obviously, has the same knowledge of opera or the same background, but I think

David Ferguson

Joined in 1993 • Treasurer from 1995 – 2006
President from 2006 – 2008 • Chair from 2008 – 2010
Participated on the following Committees: COC Executive,
Nominating Committee, COC Finance & Operating
Committee, COHC Board, COHC Finance & Operating, Golf

PAUL SPAFFORD

Joined in 1995 • President-elect from 2006 – 2008
President from 2008 – 2010
Participated on the following Committees: COC Executive,
Nominating Committee, COC Finance & Operating
Committee, Fundraising Committee, COHC Board, COHC
Finance & Operating, Corporate Development

DOUGLAS LUDWIG

Joined in 2003 • Retired in 2010

TRINITY JACKMAN

Joined in 2010
Participated in the following Committees: Operanation

it’s that mix that’s wonderful. I had the ultimate respect for Richard Bradshaw. He was an extraordinary leader. You only had to talk to him once, and you knew that one way or another that house was going to happen!

“I absolutely was enthralled by the *Ring Cycle*. And to have so much Canadian talent – it was breathtaking. And probably my other favourite was *Boris Godunov* because I love opera with great choruses. One of my great personal experiences happened after purchasing a backstage evening through an auction at the COC golf tournament. It was for *Turandot* and I remember being in the rehearsal hall while the chorus was warming up. I’ve never experienced anything like that. As great as it is to hear in the audience, standing right in the middle of it was – I felt like I was 15 feet off the ground! So powerful and beautiful.”

Trinity Jackman is a new member to the COC Board, but the Jackman family has been a philanthropic mainstay of the company for many decades. “I grew up going to the COC, and then in my 20s I lived in San Francisco and New York, so I had exposure to really incredible opera companies. I moved back to Toronto about two years ago and got to experience the amazing new house and to meet Alexander who really impressed me. So when the opportunity arose to join the board, I was thrilled to be a part of the company.

“I believe that Alexander is very sensible in maintaining a repertoire that includes popular operas, but he’s also willing to take some risks. I really enjoyed *Aida*. I felt the pared-down set was perfect – and I really heard the music for the first time. To keep the art form relevant, you have to take those sorts of risks. I think it will build audiences. And the fact that some people didn’t like it, well, it’s good that’s there’s a dialogue. It makes it more exciting!

“I will probably be involved in developing Operanation and helping with the ongoing efforts of the COC staff and board for increasing the audience and subscribers in the age group under 40. It’s great to raise awareness in that community of people who don’t necessarily know much about opera.”

Highlights for Trinity? “I thought *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* was amazing because it really struck me as something so original. The sets were beautiful and the music was fantastic. It was very exciting for me to see something that was so innovative and that a Canadian company was involved in its production. People often think that opera is rarefied and elitist. But it’s an art form that includes so many other disciplines – music, singing, orchestra, dance, drama, comedy, art direction. It incorporates all of the arts, so I think it’s very accessible.”

In my discussions with a few board members, it became apparent that while their interests are diverse, and the routes that brought them to the COC vary, there is one thing they overwhelmingly have in common – a love for this company and for the dedicated work it does to promote the magnificence of opera. Board meetings may take place at our administrative offices at 227 Front St. E., but the work and devotion of our board members spreads throughout our city, and beyond, so that the COC can continue to thrive and offer the best artistic experience possible. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts. ■

Suzanne Vanstone is Senior Communications Manager, Editorial at the Canadian Opera Company.

**2011/2012 – A SEASON OF PHENOMENAL
CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIVAS**

Jane Archibald, Susan Graham, Adrienne Pieczonka, Erin Wall... and many more

RENEWAL DEADLINE – APRIL 30

DR. WATERS

CONTRIBUTING TO THE FULLNESS OF LIFE

By **NIKITA GOURSKI**

Back in 1986, Dr. William Waters wrote a cheque to the Canadian Opera Company for \$50. This year he has generously come forward as the lead donor for the COC’s Year-End Matching Appeal. But even though his contributions carry a few more zeroes these days than they did 25 years ago, Dr. Waters’ fundamental motivation for giving to the COC has remained the same over the years. “We have to ask what is worth something in life,” the accomplished entrepreneur and Professor Emeritus of Economics and Finance at the University of Toronto reflects. “And what the COC does is create a broader expanse of opportunities for understanding and enrichment.” Elements, he’ll be the first to recognize, that contribute directly to the fullness of life.

Not surprisingly, Dr. Waters’ own life is a showcase of opera’s enriching capability. His introduction to the art form came some 48 years ago when, as a doctoral student in economics at the University of Chicago, he attended a performance of *La Bohème* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. “That was very special,” he says, noting that the good friend who invited him to the show is now his wife. Back in Toronto, where Dr. Waters taught finance at UofT for many years, the couple became regular COC-goers and donated to the company frequently. These gifts were in accord with a general philanthropic principle of

contributing to organizations that were “genuinely supportive of the soul,” Dr. Waters says.

His interest in opera acquired an added dimension, however, when he met an aspiring singer who was working as a server at a restaurant near his office at Yonge and Eglinton. She was in a predicament familiar to many young artists in the music world. “Two jobs, going to the opera performance program at UofT, after having done a bachelor of music degree. And you have to ask, ‘What are the prospects?’ She got some help, but not as much as one needs. So I became, you might say, her patron.” With Dr. Waters’ financial support, the young opera singer continued her training in New York and is currently on stage in Gdańsk, Poland. “So I’m rather happy about that experience,” he recalls. “And it also was consistent with my ideas about what is worth doing for young people.” The COC Ensemble Studio – Canada’s



Dr. William Waters

premier training program for young opera professionals – naturally enough became the beneficiary of Dr. Waters’ interest in supporting “young, up-and-coming singers,” and it has received hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations from him to date.

This year he is stepping up to the challenge of the COC’s Year-End Matching Appeal. Over the past 14 years, this special appeal has enabled us to expand our repertoire of original productions, provided important funding to the Ensemble Studio and allowed us to make opera more accessible to a wider audience through exciting outreach and education activities. All gifts received by June 30, 2011 are eligible for the match. The fact that the program has a built-in collaborative fundraising element “is certainly a very significant positive from my perspective,” Dr. Waters says. “I think we’re all brought up, mostly now anyway, to think of what can we do for others, at the same time as we do something for ourselves. And I think if I want to enjoy opera then I should contribute to it.” Whether that be \$50 or some other significant sum! ■

To learn more about the Year-End Matching Appeal and supporting the COC, please contact Christie Darville at **416-306-2375** or **christied@coc.ca**.

Nikita Gourski is the Communications Intern at the Canadian Opera Company.

CARSEN'S UNDERWORLD

ORFEO ED EURIDICE

By SUZANNE VANSTONE

The last time director Robert Carsen was with us was for the world premiere of Harry Somers' *Mario and the Magician* – staged at the Elgin Theatre in 1992. In the intervening 19 years he has become an extremely busy and much sought-after director in major opera houses throughout the world, as well as directing various theatre projects and designing several prominent exhibitions in Paris including *Marie-Antoinette* at the Grand Palais, and *Charles Garnier: An Architect for an Empire* at the École des Beaux-Arts. We welcome him back with the company's premiere of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, a production he originally staged in Chicago in 2006. Carsen is directing our *Iphigenia in Tauris* next season, which also originated with Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Christoph Willibald Gluck composed *Orfeo ed Euridice* in 1762 and it was the first of his three “reform” operas; the other two being *Alceste* (1767) and *Paride ed Elena* (1770). With *Orfeo*, Gluck transformed the operatic landscape. From the early 1700s, the focus had been on *opera seria*, which may seem a slight misnomer now as it evolved from its original dramatic intensity into a rather absurd and self-indulgent way to communicate important musical and dramatic values. Famed castrati and prima donnas vied for attention onstage with elaborate vocal coloratura lines, and audiences were encouraged to incite further histrionics.

Carsen says, “When Gluck wrote this first of his reform operas, he made a return to certain kinds of mythology and storytelling with the interest of ‘cleaning up’ opera – removing any extraneous decoration. Opera had become almost corrupted by the star singers and their need to show off. Gluck decided it was time to return to the basics. It was not for nothing that he chose as subject matter the myth of Orfeo, and the tragic stories of Iphigénie and Armide – all classical stories that have their roots in Greek mythology. He returned to the gravitas and simplicity of the original Greek theatre, based as it was on Greek religious ritual, in order to give back to opera its meaning and power.

“Our production was really an attempt to respond to that same simplicity. For Lyric Opera of Chicago we did a ‘mini-Gluck’ cycle. We performed *Orfeo* and *Iphigénie* in two consecutive seasons and I did them with the same design team. Instead of having numerous scene changes and elaborate sets and choreography, I wanted to use as little as possible.” Carsen, Tobias Hoheisel (set and costume designer), and Peter Van Praet (who shares credit for the lighting design with Carsen) created a world that seems suspended between life and afterlife. The relatively unadorned set is backed by a lit cyclorama and has a gravel floor with an open area that is Euridice's grave as well as the

gateway to the underworld. Very few props are used.

“The entire opera has one set,” continues Carsen. “This story is so essential and deals with what opera deals with best – love and death. Euridice has died unexpectedly of a snake bite, and Orfeo, desperately in love with her, will do anything to bring her back to life. And, of course, who of us hasn't wanted to be able to do that? Orfeo manages it. His love is so strong he is prepared to brave the Furies and lead Euridice back from limbo – the place between the living and the dead. And he's completely prepared to fulfill the condition that he mustn't look back at her until he retrieves her from the underworld.

“But then there is the extraordinary first scene of the third act, where Euridice simply can't bear the situation. She thinks Orfeo doesn't love her anymore and her imagination gives way to self-



Robert Carsen

doubt, recriminations and fear. The piece deals exclusively with human emotions – the good and the bad. Orfeo gives in, looks at Euridice and she dies. He then laments her death for a second time. But now the tragedy becomes a different one because this time her death is his fault. And Amore, who has led Orfeo on both occasions, brings Euridice back to life a second time.

“In this production we have made Orfeo – Orpheus, god of music – as human as possible. We haven't made him a mythological character or a god, we've set our production in a modern Greek rural society. And it starts with Euridice's death. In our production her family and friends bring her onstage and bury her and then leave Orfeo to mourn her on his own as he gives way to overwhelming grief.

“Gluck wrote this in the early 1760s and re-wrote it some years later, when he was court composer to Versailles, to the French court. Marie Antoinette was his pupil. He had taught her when she was a child in Vienna and then she brought him to Versailles. He re-wrote *Orfeo* for the French with a new libretto, *Orphée et Eurydice*. He added a great deal more ballet music and the revised piece has quite a different feeling. But this one, the original Vienna version, in Italian, is about an hour and a half and we perform it without a break. We really wanted our production to be inspired by the reforms which Gluck had bravely attempted in order to match the kind of reform that he was attempting in the construction of the piece.

“Gluck was a wonderful composer who wouldn't sacrifice anything to a direct expression of the drama that he was dealing with. He was not interested in merely writing something that was flattering to

the ear, melodious, or capable of showing off his compositional skills, he just wouldn't do it. He was always aware of the drama, which is why his pieces are so tightly constructed. *Iphigénie en Tauride*, a bit longer at two hours, is also very compact and requires a lot of concentration from the audience. *Orfeo* is a very beautiful, touching piece and when you think that there are only three singers and most of the piece is carried by Orfeo himself – you realize what a very powerful form of expression it is.”



The Canadian Opera Company presents *Orfeo ed Euridice*. David Daniels as Orfeo and Isabel Bayrakdarian as Euridice in the Lyric Opera of Chicago production, 2006. Photo: Robert Kusel

Next year's production of *Iphigenia* is more psychologically developed. It is a more intense, nightmarish world than the one Orfeo inhabits. Carsen says, “*Iphigénie* is more dream-like whereas *Orfeo* ends in a greater reality. But in both cases we're dealing with people and their emotions. We've tried to create spaces where there is nothing to detract from that. In

Iphigénie the space represents the trauma, the nightmare she can't get out of – and no light is let in. In *Orfeo* we play a lot with the light, as the whole of a rocky landscape is surrounded by a very large cyclorama. An intense wall of light surrounds the space. So they're two quite different responses to one composer's work.”

In Chicago, Carsen worked with David Daniels and Isabel Bayrakdarian. Isabel returns for the COC production and Lawrence Zazzo sings Orfeo. This production of *Orfeo* has not been mounted since Chicago and Carsen may decide to change some of it, but still retain the same basic production values. “I will see what happens with Lawrence Zazzo, whom I adore as a performer and have worked with quite recently. It'll be interesting to see what he brings to it. I like making each production work for a new singer – and not simply use a prescribed pattern that you just put them into. I've visited the new opera house several times but I've never staged anything there. I'm looking forward to that and I think both operas will suit the building very well.

“Next year I'm going to design my first opera – *The Turn of the Screw* – in Vienna. After designing the very large exhibitions in Paris, it led me to consider designing an opera. I'm very involved and very passionate about design and lighting and I work with wonderful colleagues who are extremely patient with me. I hope I will be able to bring a ‘Gluckian’ integrity and simplicity to my new design work.” ■

Suzanne Vanstone is Senior Communications Manager, Editorial at the Canadian Opera Company.

For further insights into *Orfeo ed Euridice* please read Max Loppert's article in the spring house program.

THE BACH CHAMBER MUSIC PAVILION, AMSTERDAM.
THE PERFECT PLACE TO APPLAUD RANGE ROVER'S
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION.



©2011 Jaguar Land Rover Canada ULC

Land Rover Canada is proud to be the Official Automotive Sponsor of the
Canadian Opera Company at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts.



FOUR SEASONS CENTRE
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

RANGE
ROVER

COC OPERATOURS

The COC Operatours for the 2011/2012
Season - **FIRST ANNOUNCEMENTS!**

THREE FABULOUS VISITS TO THE METROPOLITAN OPERA IN NEW YORK

January 9 – February 2, 2012

Three NEW productions!

HANDEL, VIVALDI, RAMEAU

The Enchanted Island

c. William Christie
A musical pastiche in 18th-century style with an incredible cast of Baroque specialists including Danielle de Niese, Joyce DiDonato, David Daniels, Plácido Domingo, Luca Pisaroni

WAGNER *Götterdämmerung*

See casting in right-hand column

DONIZETTI *Anna Bolena*

c. Marco Armiliato with Anna Netrebko, Elīna Garanča, Ildar Abdrazakov

March 11 – 16, 2012

A dazzling array of vocal fireworks!

DONIZETTI *L'elisir d'amore* with Diana Damrau, Juan Diego Flórez, Mariusz Kwiecien, Alessandro Corbelli

MUSSORGSKY *Khovanshchina*

c. Kirill Petrenko with Olga Borodina, Vladimir Galouzine, Ildar Abdrazakov, Anatoli Kotscherga

MOZART *Don Giovanni* n.p.

c. Sir Andrew Davis with Marina Rebeka, Annette Dasch, Isabel Leonard, Matthew Polenzani, Gerald Finley, John Relyea

VERDI *Macbeth* with Nadja

Michael, Thomas Hampson, Dimitri Pittas, Günther Groissböck

April 26 – May 3 and

May 5 – May 12, 2012

(Two *Ring Cycles* – each 8 nights)

Experience the Met's new groundbreaking \$40-million *Ring Cycle*!

WAGNER *Ring Cycle*

c. James Levine d. Robert Lepage with Katarina Dalayman and Deborah Voigt alternating as Brünnhilde, Gary Lehman and Stephen Gould as Siegfried, Eric Owens and Hans-Peter König as Alberich, Bryn Terfel as Wotan, Eva-Marie Westbroek and Jonas Kaufmann as the Volsung pair

c. – conductor

d. – director

n.p. – new production

To receive complete booking information (as it becomes available in the spring), please indicate which tour is of interest to you and apply by e-mail to operatours@golden.net or send a separate, self-addressed, stamped envelope (business size) to: COC Operatours c/o Merit Travel, 114 – 101 Cherryhill Blvd., London, ON N6H 4S4.

NEW VISION, NEW BRAND, NEW WEBSITE



With the launch of the 2011/2012 season in January, the COC also launched a new look. This look comes as a result of an exhaustive re-branding process that aims to better represent the company under our fresh, young leadership team.

OUR VISION:

The Canadian Opera Company is dedicated to being one of the greatest opera companies in the world. Through the leadership of its artistic team and its management, the COC is committed to creating, innovating and delivering a live experience of the highest quality that reflects the passion, vitality, relevance and power of operatic theatre.

To better reflect this vision, our new brand centres around a logo which represents both the intertwined "COC" letterforms as well as a timeless infinity symbol. As a palindrome, the logo reads both left-to-right and right-to-left. It nods to the COC's history while looking ambitiously to the future, with opera always at its core.

Along with a new brand for the company, we are also launching a fresh look for coc.ca. The new site incorporates the confident and clean look of the brand as well as making the parts of the site you use the most easier to find. We've grouped information in a simpler way, with more emphasis on the operas themselves and the artists and people that make them happen. Let us know what you think, and look for exciting news of how we plan to make coc.ca the national hub for Canadian opera content.

2011/2012 – A SEASON OF THE WORLD'S LEADING SINGING ACTORS

Russell Braun, Mark Delavan, Alan Held, Joseph Kaiser, John Relyea... and many more

RENEWAL DEADLINE – APRIL 30

THANK YOU COC VOLUNTEERS

By GILLIAN STORY

The glitz, gowns and forced grins of the awards season may be gone with the winter winds, but if the Canadian Opera Company could give an award for “Best Performance in a Supporting Role,” it would have to go to our team of tireless volunteers, who have played a vital role in the company since the very beginning.

In 1947, nine Toronto women met to form the “Opera and Concerts Committee,” with the purpose of supporting and promoting the Royal Conservatory’s public performances. Their focus quickly became opera rather than general concerts, and over the course of the next 10 years, the committee was actively involved in selling tickets, fundraising, and even making refreshments for cast members – greatly contributing to the birth of what would eventually become the Canadian Opera Company. A few years later, the Canadian Opera Women’s

Committee was officially founded, and the importance of volunteers within the company has only grown since (though they are no longer required to supply sandwiches for hungry opera singers!). Since that time, many other volunteer groups (i.e. Speakers Bureau) have been formed and have become familiar faces for both staff and patrons alike.

The generosity of our volunteers with their time and talents plays a significant role in supporting the Canadian Opera Company’s high standards of excellence. To paraphrase William Shakespeare: “We can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks.” ■

Gillian Story is the former Education and Outreach Assistant at the Canadian Opera Company.

To find out more about how you can join the COC’s volunteer family, please visit coc.ca.



COC Archives volunteers. (l – r) Back row: Anna Arabczuk, Constance Stokes, Mary McClymont, Dorothy Marshall, Birthe Joergensen (Head Archivist), Liana Orlando, Diana Bradshaw. Front row: Louise MacLeod, Jane Milisiewicz.

In celebration of National Volunteer Appreciation Week, April 10 – 16, 2011, we would like to share some numbers that represent a small sample of the incredible contributions made by Canadian Opera Company volunteers.

45,000 hours per year donated by over 150 volunteers, equalling the time of 15 to 20 full-time staff

9,000 charitable tax receipts filed yearly by an office volunteer

7,000 packages carefully assembled by a team of volunteers during our subscription ticket mailing

481 students led on tours of the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre by volunteer docents in 2009/2010

237 volunteer usher shifts per season for the Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre presented by National Bank

163 currently active volunteers

73 pre-performance chats delivered per year by members of the COC Volunteer Speakers Bureau

54 years of service from our longest-standing volunteer

10 volunteers on Opera Shop and Friends Lounge duty at the Four Seasons Centre for every performance (66 in 2010/2011)

8 the age of the youngest supernumerary in the COC’s 2010/2011 season

6 backdrops (and countless costumes and props) created for the After School Opera Program by a long-time education volunteer

1 package of original costume drawings from the 1961 production of *The Bartered Bride* rescued from the garbage of a Toronto apartment building and filed by Archives volunteers



(l – r) Sandra Gopaul, Jacqueline Sillito, Vera Mraz, Rita Schwerdt and Gail Burton at the Opera Shop.



(l – r) Helen Crispin, Colleen Brady and Patricia Anselmi outside the Friends’ Lounge.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU FROM ALEXANDER NEEF

The professionalism and passion for opera of the many individuals who volunteer with the COC are integral to the vitality of this company and art form. I never fail to be impressed by the enthusiasm and selflessness of these ambassadors who give generously of their time, energy and talents.

On behalf of the company, please accept my deepest gratitude and appreciation for your commitment. Please know that your contributions do not go unnoticed and I hope that you will feel rewarded by the work we achieve together each season.

THE OPERA EXCHANGE: MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO OPERA

The COC, in partnership with The Munk School of Global Affairs and the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto, presents three half-day symposia on operas performed in the COC’s 2010/2011 season. Local and international academics lead in-depth explorations on operatic themes, music, and dramatic interpretations of stories. The spring session of Opera Exchange explores Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

| <i>Ariadne auf Naxos: From A to Z</i> Saturday, May 14, 2011, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Walter Hall, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto | |
|--|--|
| 8 a.m. | Coffee |
| 9 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. | Alison Keith, Department of Classics, University of Toronto, “Classical Ariadnes” |
| 9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. | Bryan Gilliam, Francis Hall Fox Professor in Humanities, Duke University, “ <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> from A to Z: Ariadne, Zerbinetta, and Transformation” |
| 10:15 a.m. – 11 a.m. | COC panel discussion, with Sir Andrew Davis (conductor) and Adrienne Pieczonka (soprano); moderator: Ali Kashani (COC Volunteer Speakers Bureau) |

Tickets \$20 (Student & Faculty discounts available; free for U of T Faculty of Music students with valid student card and photo ID)

Contact Ticket Services at 416-363-8231 or purchase online at coc.ca.

Presented in partnership with:



CANADIAN LYRIC COLORATURA SOPRANO JANE ARCHIBALD MAKES HER COC DEBUT THIS SPRING AS ZERBINETTA IN RICHARD STRAUSS'S *ARIADNE AUF NAXOS*. SHE RETURNS TO THE COC NEXT SEASON SINGING THE TITLE ROLE IN OUR MAY 2012 PRODUCTION OF HANDEL'S *SEMELE*. SHE RECENTLY SPOKE WITH US FROM HER HOME IN AUSTRIA.

JANE ARCHIBALD'S CALLING CARD

CANADIAN COLORATURA DISCUSSES ZERBINETTA

By GIANMARCO SEGATO

The path to becoming a professional singer is a long one – how did yours begin?

I come from a musical town (Truro, Nova Scotia,) and a musical family. My dad was an amateur jazz pianist and my first musical experiences were with him, just singing along or playing *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, that kind of thing. I loved singing – it was my favourite class at school.

Was opera part of your upbringing at all?

Definitely not, but there was classical music. I was drawn to that from an early age and started taking voice lessons when I was about 11 or 12 – I started singing German *lieder* and French *mélodies* and fell in love with singing in other languages. I think I sang my first opera aria when I was 15 or 16 – Cherubino's "Voi che sapete" and loved it! But even at 18, when I knew I was going to study voice at university, I didn't really understand at that point that it could mean a career as an opera singer.

This spring, you'll be making your COC debut as Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. How big a part has the music of Richard Strauss played in your career?

As a student, it took me a while to get used to Strauss. Now he seems positively Romantic compared to some of the more contemporary music I've gone on to sing, but at the time I liked



Jane Archibald

Handel and Mozart, and Strauss's shifting harmonies seemed a bit strange. Now he plays a huge part in my career. I always feel like I sing very healthily when I'm performing Strauss. A lot of people say that about Mozart, but for me, Strauss brings out the best in my voice. My first Strauss role was Sophie (*Der Rosenkavalier*) at the Vienna Staatsoper, which was a success, and I've gone on

to sing Zerbinetta, Aminta (*Die schweigsame Frau*), and the Italian singer in *Capriccio*. I also sang Naiad in *Ariadne* before I sang Zerbinetta.

Sort of a stepping stone role...

Yes, in Vienna, I was the cover for Zerbinetta and many Zerbinettas start off doing Naiad first, which is a very tricky part as well, I have to say. But not as tricky as Zerbinetta!

When did you first perform Zerbinetta?

It was a bit of a last-minute thing – the story of my career. During the spring of 2007 I had a lot on my plate during my first year as a "fest" singer at the Vienna Staatsoper. I was supposed to be covering Zerbinetta there, but had yet to learn it. About a week before I got the call asking me to go to Geneva as a last-minute replacement for Marlis Petersen, I'd run through the role once with a coach saying "let's just crash through it!" On a Friday evening I got the call from Geneva just two weeks before the premiere. I knew that Zerbinetta was going to be a great role for me and I was going to be learning it in a month anyway for the Staatsoper, but it wasn't ready. I told them I



The Canadian Opera Company presents *Ariadne auf Naxos*. D'arcy Bleiker as Harlequin and Katarzyna Dondalska as Zerbinetta in the Welsh National Opera production, 2004. Photo: Clive Barda

had to think about it for half an hour and decide if it was crazy but doable, or just crazy. I lived the whole weekend listening to a recording on my iPod just to get the harmonies in my head. By the time I flew to Geneva on Sunday night, it was about 80% learned – they understood that I had never sung it before. It was a very intense two weeks, but very exciting because I was discovering this role that has become a kind of calling card for me.

Are there aspects of Zerbinetta's character which you particularly relate to?

Unlike many coloratura roles – Adele in *Die Fledermaus* for example – she's not particularly soubrettish, nor a coquette. She's not one-dimensional and I like that because we all bring a part of ourselves to every role we sing and personally, I am not a coquette-ish, flirty, girly kind of character. Zerbinetta can be played that way, but absolutely does not have to be. In fact, I think she actually has a lot in common with Ariadne. They're

often painted as opposites but if you listen to her, she's saying to Ariadne: "Look, we're all the same, women all go through the same experiences with men. We're hurt by them, and it's just a matter of choice how we react to it. And you're choosing to react..."

In a very extreme way!

Yes, "by martyring yourself on this island, and I'm choosing to react by moving on to the next one before I get hurt by the last one." Neither are particularly healthy responses, I suppose, but she comes across as a real person.

During the second half of the opera, Zerbinetta has to sing one of the longest, most demanding of all soprano arias, "Grossmächtige Prinzessin." Do you have to be careful about pacing yourself through something like that?

Absolutely. In December, I was singing it in Paris and again, it was a situation where I didn't have a lot of rehearsal time. I hadn't sung Zerbinetta for about a year and it was a staging where you're running around, jumping

and leaping, and they'd neglected to tell me I'd be in a bikini, so you're somewhat preoccupied with that as well – "suck in the stomach!" I got through the first couple of rehearsals of the aria sweating and gasping for breath thinking "How am I going to do this?" And it is a reminder that pacing is so important – figuring out the spots where you find you're getting out of breath, and making very strategic calculations. Once you've been singing something as challenging as this for 12 minutes, it stacks up. It's definitely a very aerobic aria, even after the 12th show in a row when you've worked things out.

Your career has been mostly centred in Europe – are you looking forward to returning to Canada?

Oh, you can't believe how much. I have so many friends in Toronto because I lived there for four years after I finished school, and just to be in Canada and buy President's Choice stuff at Loblaws and speak my own language and be in my own culture... these are things that I no longer take for granted. I have wanted to sing at the COC for a long time, and it's nice to be coming home to do that, especially in what has become a calling card role.

We're also looking forward to next season when you return to sing Handel's *Semele*.

Me too! I just finished singing Cleopatra in Paris and said to myself "Oh God, I forgot how much I love Handel." I'm really excited about the *Semele*. ■

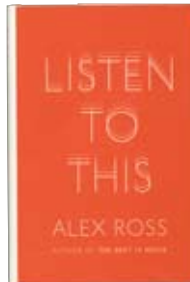
Gianmarco Segato is the COC's Retail and Editorial Co-ordinator.

For further insights into *Ariadne auf Naxos*, please read Suzanne Vanstone's interview with Adrianne Pieczonka in the spring house program.

THIS SPRING, ALEXANDER NEEF RECOMMENDS...

Listen to This by Alex Ross

Listen to This takes its title from a beloved 2004 essay in which Alex Ross describes his late-blooming discovery of pop music. It showcases the best of his writing from more than a decade at *The New Yorker*. These pieces, dedicated to classical and popular artists alike, are at once erudite and lively. He vibrantly sketches canonical composers such as Schubert,



Verdi and Brahms; gives us in-depth interviews with modern pop masters such as Björk and Radiohead; and, introduces us to music students at a Newark high school and indie-rock hipsters in Beijing.

Whether his subject is Mozart or Bob Dylan, Ross shows how music expresses the full complexity of the human condition. Witty, passionate, and brimming with insight, *Listen to This* teaches us how to listen more closely.

Farrar, Straus and Giroux. \$32.75 including tax

La Cenerentola (Cinderella)
Riccardo Chailly, conductor, Teatro Comunale Bologna Orchestra and Chorus. With Cecilia Bartoli, Enzo Dara, William Matteuzzi, Alessandro Corbelli and Michele Pertusi
Decca, 2 CDs, \$52.75 including tax



Cecilia Bartoli sings up a Rossinian coloratura storm in the role that brought her to operatic stardom. Riccardo Chailly leads an all-Italian cast, orchestra and chorus in Rossini's sparkling combination of witty tunes and sophisticated melodrama.

BOTH AVAILABLE AT THE OPERA SHOP

KPMG OPERA GOLF CLASSIC

The Canadian Opera Company is pleased to announce the 17th Annual Opera Golf Classic presented by KPMG. A longstanding Supporting Sponsor of the tournament, KPMG has generously increased their support this year as Title Sponsor.

On Monday, June 6, 2011, Canada's top corporate executives and their guests will gather at the Scarboro Golf and Country Club for the KPMG Opera Golf Classic. This event is the COC's largest annual fundraiser, and has raised almost \$2 million for the Canadian Opera Company over the past 17 years.

For just \$5,000 you and three other guests can partake in this fun-filled day as a foursome! With many sponsors returning year after year, the KPMG Opera Golf Classic is one of the more popular events on the circuit, and known to be a high-quality, true

golfer's tournament. Participants enjoy a full lunch before an invigorating day on the course, followed by a cocktail reception and gourmet dinner. This event will also feature a spectacular silent auction plus an incredible gift bag. ■

Title Sponsor



For more information about the event and how to donate, please contact Tracy Briggs, Special Events Manager, at 416-306-2305 or tracyb@coc.ca.

SAVE THE DATE! OPERANATION VIII is scheduled for Friday, October 21, 2011, at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts.

2011/2012 - FASCINATING MINDS, AMAZING VISION, BRILLIANT PRODUCTIONS

Zhang Huan blends Handel, Greek and Chinese mythology, indescribable beauty and a real Ming Dynasty temple

Daniele Finzi Pasca brings Cirque du Soleil to 21st-century opera

Catherine Malfitano teams with **Sir Andrew Davis** to create comic magic

Robert Carsen uses dance melded with powerful drama to illuminate the tragedy and humanity of Gluck

Christopher Alden, **Michael Levine** and **Johannes Debus** powerfully return Verdi to his own time

RENEWAL DEADLINE - APRIL 30

SUN LIFE FINANCIAL



Making the Arts More Accessible®



We are pleased to support the **Sun Life Financial Accessibility Program**, at the Canadian Opera Company, which encompasses **SURTITLES™**, wheelchair seating, hearing-assistive and vision-impaired devices.



™ SURTITLES is a registered trade-mark of the Canadian Opera Company.

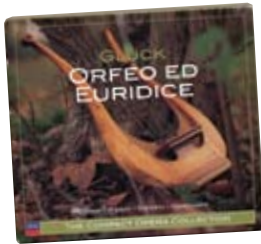
® Making the Arts More Accessible is a registered trade-mark of Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada.

BRING IN THE BLING THIS SPRING!

Jewellery Trunk Shows, Musical Gems, and So Much More at the Opera Shop

The Opera Shop, located on the main floor of the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room, offers a fine selection of opera recordings on CD and DVD, opera-related books, giftware, jewellery made by Canadian artisans and COC souvenirs.

This spring we recommend the following recordings from Universal Classics:



John Eliot Gardiner, conductor, English Baroque Soloists, Monteverdi Choir. With Derek Lee Ragin, Sylvia McNair, Cyndia Sieden
Decca, 2 CDs
\$22.75 including tax

The 1762 Vienna version of the score sung in Italian, with celebrated countertenor Derek Lee Ragin as Orfeo. A recording hailed by *Gramophone* magazine as “a total interpretation of the work, more penetrating than any other in the catalogue.”



James Levine, conductor, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. With Anna Tomowa-Sintow, Agnes Baltsa, Kathleen Battle, Gary Lakes, Hermann Prey
Deutsche Grammophon
2 CDs, \$22.75 including tax

A classic recording now offered at budget price. Levine has always held this score close to his heart and the cast features two of the great 20th-century exponents of their roles: Anna Tomowa-Sintow's regal Ariadne and Kathleen Battle's spectacular Zerbinetta.



Patrick Summers, conductor, Gran Teatre Del Liceu Orchestra and Chorus. With Joyce DiDonato and Juan Diego Florez
Decca, 2 DVDs
\$56.50 including tax

Two of today's most celebrated Rossini singers in the very same strikingly colourful, storybook production appearing onstage at the COC this spring!

Shop for much more at the Opera Shop or online at coc.ca!

The Opera Shop is a project of the Canadian Opera Company, in partnership with L'Atelier Grigorian and Decca - The Opera Label. All proceeds support the Canadian Opera Company.



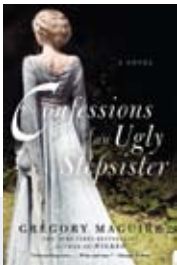
BE PART OF OUR BOOK CLUB THIS SPRING!

Inspired by the COC's production of Rossini's *Cinderella*, our online Book Club is gearing up again to examine another take on this timeless story, with a novel by Gregory Maguire: *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister*.

Maguire is best known for his series of Oz novels, including *Wicked*, which in turn inspired a Tony-award-winning musical. In *Confessions* he once again takes a familiar story and shows it to us in a new light, setting the tale in 17th-century Holland, with one of the stepsisters as narrator.

Join us to read the novel that the *Boston Herald* called “an engrossing story... endearing and memorable” online at coc.ca/Bookclub.

Available at the Opera Shop.
HarperCollins. \$19.50 including tax



AT THE COC WE'RE ENDEAVOURING TO USE OUR RESOURCES AS WISELY AS POSSIBLE, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE FRAGILITY OF OUR ENVIRONMENT. THE FOLLOWING THREE INITIATIVES ARE PART OF OUR CONTINUED EFFORTS.

THE GREENING OF THE COC

CATCHING SOME SUN AT THE SCENE SHOP

Spring is just beginning and the roof of the COC's scene shop is already in full bloom due to the installation of solar panels – a \$300,000, 30-kW/ac rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) system donated by Hatch, one of Canada's largest consulting engineering companies.

The scene shop, which supports the COC's production arm, is the ideal building to accommodate this sustainable rooftop solution. Its structure requires no modification to support the solar PV system and no high-rise developments overshadow the solar panels.

The new solar roof is made up of 154 PV solar panels angled to receive the most sunlight. These panels produce electricity by converting the energy contained in light into electrical power using the photovoltaic process.



Solar panels on top of the COC Scene Shop's roof.

The electricity travels from the panels to an inverter that converts the electrical energy from the DC current that the panels produce to the AC current used in the electricity grid. From there, the power from the system can be metered and sold to the grid. The system of panels is automated and features no moving parts, requiring minimal maintenance and little operation by the COC.

The rooftop solar PV system qualifies under Ontario's renewable power Feed-In Tariff (FIT) program, and the power produced will be purchased by Toronto Hydro. The panels are expected to generate approximately \$25,000 annually in additional revenue for the COC through a 20-year FIT contract that provides a subsidized rate for the electricity produced.

Hatch is an employee-owned, multidiscipline firm that provides custom process design, business strategies, technologies, and project and construction management from 65 offices around the world for clients in the metals, infrastructure and energy market sectors.

The COC is most grateful to Hatch for the generous contribution to the arts which helps us become more “green.” ■

SAVE TIME, SAVE PAPER...

and save the COC mailing and printing costs! View *Prelude* online at coc.ca/Publications. Sign up at coc.ca/Prelude with your Patron Number no later than **August 22, 2011** to indicate that you no longer wish to receive a hard copy of *Prelude*. If we do not hear back from you, we will mail your regular issue of *Prelude* in mid-September 2011.

THE BUZZ ON OUR HONEYBEES

Did you know that the Four Seasons Centre has honeybees on its staff? Last spring, two hives of honeybees were placed on the roof of the opera house, with a press conference on May 19 to announce their arrival. Since then they've enjoyed their own blog on the COC's site with updates from beekeeper Fred Davis.

Our honeybees are helping diversify the types of species of pollinators and plants in the vicinity of the opera house. It's another way to be a – literally – vital part of our community. ■

Want to stay updated on all the news of our very small friends? Check out the honeybees' own blog at coc.ca/Honeybees.



Beekeeper Fred Davis with some of the COC's honeybees

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPRING 2011

| APRIL 2011 | | |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sat | 23 7:30 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> Opening Performance |
| Tue | 26 12 p.m. | Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre* |
| Thu | 28 12 p.m. | Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio* |

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|--|
| Thu | 28 7:30 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> |
| Sat | 30 4:30 p.m. | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> Opening Performance |

APRIL 30 – RENEWAL DEADLINE to retain your same seats or renewal priority.

| MAY 2011 | | |
|----------|---------------------|--|
| Sun | 1 2 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> |
| Mon | 2 7:30 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> Working Rehearsal |
| Tue | 3 12 p.m. | Christopher Mokrzewski, piano* |
| Tue | 3 7:30 p.m. | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> |
| Wed | 4 5:30 p.m. | Brett Polegato, baritone; Liz Upchurch, piano* |
| Thu | 5 12 p.m. | Rustem Hayroudinoff, piano* |
| Sat | 7 4:30 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> |
| Sun | 8 2 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> Opening Performance |
| Tue | 10 12 p.m. | Richard Margison, tenor; Lauren Margison, soprano* |
| Tue | 10 7:30 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> |
| Wed | 11 7:30 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> |
| Thu | 12 12 p.m. | Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio* |
| Thu | 12 7:30 p.m. | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> |
| Fri | 13 7:30 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> |
| Sat | 14 9:30 a.m. | The Opera Exchange: <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> . Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park |
| Sat | 14 7:30 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> |
| Sun | 15 2 p.m. | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> |

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|
| Tue | 17 12 p.m. | Tokai Quartet; Matjash Morzewski, choreographer; Jacqueline Woodley, soprano* |
| Tue | 17 7:30 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> |
| Wed | 18 7:30 p.m. | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> |
| Thu | 19 12 p.m. | The Rudolph Family Chamber Players* |
| Thu | 19 6 p.m. | Golden Circle Event |
| Thu | 19 7:30 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> |
| Fri | 20 7:30 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> |
| Sat | 21 7:30 p.m. | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> |
| Sun | 22 2 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> |
| Tue | 24 12 p.m. | Doug MacNaughton, voice/guitar* |
| Tue | 24 7:30 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> |
| Wed | 25 7:30 p.m. | <i>Cinderella</i> |
| Thu | 26 12 p.m. | Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio* |
| Thu | 26 7:30 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> |
| Fri | 27 7:30 p.m. | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> |
| Sat | 28 4:30 p.m. | <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> |
| Sun | 29 2 p.m. | <i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i> |
| Tue | 31 12 p.m. | Théâtre la Tangente; Louise Naubert, artistic director* |

| JUNE 2011 | | |
|-----------|------------------|---|
| Wed | 1 12 p.m. | Rachel Mercer, cello* |
| Thu | 2 12 p.m. | Benjamin Cruchley, piano* |
| Mon | 6 | KPMG Opera Golf Classic at Scarboro Golf and Country Club |

| | | |
|-----|------------------|---|
| Wed | 8 12 p.m. | Contact Contemporary Music* |
| Wed | 15 6 p.m. | PC Summer Recital (Patron, Trustee and Golden Circle) |

*These performances are part of the Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, presented by National Bank.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The Canadian Opera Company gratefully acknowledges the generous support of these government agencies and departments:

Operating Grants



MAJOR CORPORATE SPONSORS

2010/2011 SEASON

Sun Life Financial Accessibility Program
Encompassing SURTITLES™, Wheelchair Seating,
Hearing-Assistive and Vision-Impaired Devices

Official Automotive Sponsor
of the COC at the FSCPA



Major Supporter, Ensemble Studio
Production Sponsor
Mozart's *The Magic Flute*

Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour

BMO Financial Group Pre-Performance
Opera Chats and BMO Financial Group
Student Dress Rehearsals
Aida Opening Night Sponsor



Presenting Sponsor
Opera for a New Age and
Operation VII

Production Co-sponsors
Adams' *Nixon in China*

Presenting Sponsor,
Free Concert Series in the
Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre



Official Canadian Wine
of the COC at the FSCPA

KPMG Opera
Golf Classic

Preferred Fragrance
Sponsor

Preferred Medical Services
Provider



Preferred Hospitality Sponsor

Official Media Sponsors

Digital Marketing Sponsor

