

**CATHERINE MALFITANO**  
BORN INTO THE RIGHT TRUNK!

**JOHN RELYEA**  
FOUR VILLAINS...  
FOUR SIGNATURES

**ALAN HELD**  
A DOUBLE BILL OF SUN AND SHADOW

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**  
**ENSEMBLE CIRCLE**

**MYTH MANIFEST**  
ZHANG HUAN'S *SEMELE*



A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTOR  
**ALEXANDER NEEF**  
**SPRING INTO OPERA**



Photo: Rider Dyce

Opera is such a collaborative business that great artists make very specific decisions about *who* they want to work with and *where* they want to work. As more of the world's best artists choose us, you, the audience, are the ultimate beneficiary; the better the artists, the better the art on stage. Is it any wonder why welcoming new artists to our company is a particular pleasure of mine?

This spring it is our privilege to have the legendary Catherine Malfitano join us to direct our new double bill – Zemlinsky's *A Florentine Tragedy* and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. She has such an incredible amount of operatic wisdom and artistic stagecraft to impart to all of us that I can't wait to see what the rehearsals will produce. I'm also excited to have the renowned singing actor Alan Held here as the lead in both operas. He is sure to gather many fans, and, fortunately for all of us, he will be returning in future seasons.

Also this spring, John Relyea – the opera world's first choice to sing the quartet of demonic characters in *The Tales of Hoffmann* – is finally making his debut with us. John's father, the

great Canadian bass-baritone Gary Relyea, performed many times with the COC over the years. I am very proud to have the Relyeas join Louis and Gino Quilico, and Victor and Russell Braun as COC father-son opera stars.

Opera is a synthesis of many art forms, and a huge part of its presentation is the theatrical and visual aspect. Zhang Huan, our *Semele* director, is a visual artist of great renown and his ability to merge art forms is second nature. Zhang has placed this production of Handel's Baroque masterpiece within the walls of a 450-year-old Ming Dynasty temple that he rescued from ruin a few years ago – surely one of the oldest and most original opera sets ever. But the set is only one part of Zhang's vision – cultural and historical differences melt away in the face of human nature and sublime music.

Join us this spring as we continue to develop relationships with great artists. And consider this – in 2012/2013 we welcome no fewer than **33 new artists** to the stage of the Four Seasons Centre. Prepare to be amazed! ■

Finally, after a very full year of coachings, role studying, language lessons, concert performances, school tours and countless rehearsals, our Ensemble Studio members get their chance to shine on the mainstage in the lead roles for one special performance of *Semele*. Come hear the future of Canadian opera on May 23!



# Prelude

*A gift to our friends*

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All information is correct at time of printing.

Front Cover: The COC presents *Semele* in co-production with Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie. Jeremy Ovenden as Jupiter and Ying Huang as Semele in a scene from Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, 2009. Photo: Karl Forster

## SAVE TIME, SAVE PAPER...

and save the COC mailing and printing costs! View *Prelude* online at [coc.ca/Publications](http://coc.ca/Publications). Sign up at [coc.ca/Prelude](http://coc.ca/Prelude) with your Patron Number no later than **August 31, 2012** 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 September, 2012.

# Happy Birthday ENSEMBLE CIRCLE!

Practically all of Toronto's major cultural institutions have introduced membership programs designed for younger patrons in



(l - r) Ashleigh Semkiw, Trinity Jackman, Gillian Tweedie

order to court a new generation of arts lovers to the city's museums, galleries and performance spaces. When the COC launched its own take on the initiative last May, it only made sense to call it the Ensemble Circle, a name that nods to our iconic

Ensemble Studio, which for more than three decades has been Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals. Though one is new and the other has a celebrated past, both of our ensembles are engaged in complementary projects: the Ensemble Studio brings together homegrown artists who define the future of opera in this country, while the Ensemble Circle creates a community of like-minded individuals - from across the arts, media and business - that will be there to appreciate, support and participate in that future.

As the Ensemble Circle reaches its one-year anniversary, the program can boast some striking achievements. We hit

capacity membership numbers and accumulated a sizeable waiting list, indicating that enthusiasm for opera amongst

Toronto's younger demographic is high. As for the nuts and bolts of the program, EC members attend mainstage performances (*Semele* is still to come this May), enjoy rare behind-the-scenes access to the opera world, and mingle at social events where, even after the party, EC members tend to descend en masse to restaurants and bars in the surrounding area to continue their conversations.

With a very strong line-up of performances and activities planned for the 2012/2013 season - as well as the program's unbeatable social element - membership renewals are rolling in steadily for next year.

**To renew or learn more about the Ensemble Circle program, please contact Stephanie Hunt (416-306-2353/stephanieh@coc.ca) or visit coc.ca.**



(l - r) Ensemble Studio Member Ambur Braid, Kwame Gachinga, Nancy Hitzig



(l - r) Anya Shor, Manny Neubacher, Trinity Jackman, Victoria Webster, Tim Rostron and Consuelo Jackman

## 2012/2013 ENSEMBLE CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP Join Us Next Season

### Opera Tickets

Johann Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus*, directed by Christopher Alden

W. A. Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*, directed by Christopher Alden (Ensemble Studio performance)

Richard Strauss's *Salome*, directed by Atom Egoyan

### Special Events

*Operation 9*, the COC's annual fundraiser and one of the biggest events on Toronto's social calendar

Access to a closed rehearsal of Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, directed by Peter Sellars with video imagery by Bill Viola

Season-opening and closing parties

**And Much More!**

LEGENDARY PERFORMER AND DIRECTOR CATHERINE MALFITANO MAKES HER COC DEBUT THIS SPRING DIRECTING OUR DOUBLE BILL OF ZEMLINSKY'S *A FLORENTINE TRAGEDY* AND PUCCINI'S *GIANNI SCHICCHI*. HERE, SHE CHATS ABOUT THE SYNERGY BETWEEN HER DIRECTING, SINGING AND TEACHING CAREERS.

# CATHERINE MALFITANO

## BORN INTO THE RIGHT TRUNK!

By GIANMARCO SEGATO

**Not all singers desire or are suited to directing opera — what led you down the directing path?**

I was brought up in a multi-faceted theatre family. My mother was a dancer and a child actress. My father was a violinist, and somehow all of this coalesced into my career as an opera singer. I was always interested

in drama from a very early age. The first sounds I heard were made by the violin and that had a huge mark on my whole life in terms of how I related to live theatre through music.

Dance also was very influential because I started to feel music as a dancer does, through the body. My conversations with my mother very early on were completely about gesture and movement; analyzing dancers like Carla Fracci, who was a great actress as well. That was our daily bread — talking about the theatre, movies, plays, operas and ballets that we had seen. I grew up completely surrounded by, and very familiar with, many different artistic disciplines.

My father taught me to be catholic in my interests musically. He played everything from Bach to Bartók and Roger Sessions and beyond. My parents commissioned Gunther Schuller [American composer] to work for them for a concert consisting



Preliminary sketches of Zita (above) in *Gianni Schicchi* and Guido (opposite page) in *A Florentine Tragedy* by costume designer, Terese Wadden.

of music for percussion, strings and dance. I was lucky in that I was born into the right trunk and the experience I had growing up in New York also afforded me the opportunity to see *everything*. Not to mention just observing people sitting on the subway, and this developed my actor's eye even before I knew I was going to use these things.

Though I hadn't realized it, I was already thinking about directing even from the very early years of my singing career. I just recently looked back at an old interview I did with Manuela Hoelterhoff. When she asked a question about my interests other than singing — I said directing! Somehow I already knew early it was something I might end up doing one day.



Catherine Malfitano. Photo: Filip Claus

I knew I would sing, but I always lived with the feeling that I would have more careers later on – that my destiny felt multi-faceted. Directing came quite naturally. I didn't know it would, but I felt it would fascinate me and satisfy all the creative impulses in me that singing certainly did.

**Although this double bill marks your directing debut with the COC, you already have a connection with the company from teaching sessions you led with our Ensemble Studio singers in 2010. What do you feel you bring to your work with young singers?**

I began teaching privately and in master classes almost 14 years ago and eventually developed a class called "Revealing the Actor/Singer Within" in order to push the boundaries of the way singers think, and to open up the limitless possibilities of their dramatic instincts.

The important word is "revealing" because sometimes we don't know what we have inside of us that we can use. It was fun for me to develop, and very challenging and exciting too. It started with the premise of what I'd been able to do as a singer, which was so intuitive, so deeply embedded in me. When you start to travel as a young singer, you're on your own so you have to develop your own resources. I knew that once I was going to start teaching, I had to figure out a way to take the intuitive stuff and somehow make it verbal; take it outside of myself in order to give other singers a tool chest that they carry with them in order to achieve their own self actualization as a singer.

I work on many different levels – certainly on the level of interpretive skills and how to become a better actor. I'm not talking about how to walk from point A to point B on a stage – not easily performed, but that can be done well if you've got the right intention. I work on the idea of combining music with text and understanding that text doesn't live on an island of its own and music on another island far away. They work together on the same island and one feeds the other. I talk very much about what you hear in the accompaniment.



All of the score – even though as a singer, you think you're just singing the vocal line – is your character. It's the subconscious, the conscious, the unconscious, the subtext. It's layered.

The most important word I talk about is imagination. The imagination of an artist has to be huge so that you don't depend on everyone around you to tell you what to do – the coach, the conductor, the director. Working with singers in this way in my teaching was the most important deciding factor for me to make the move into directing. ■

For more of this interview, check out [coc.ca/Radio](http://coc.ca/Radio). Also, in two related podcasts, listen to Catherine Malfitano introduce music from *Gianni Schicchi* and *A Florentine Tragedy*. For further insight into our double bill, please read Gavin Plumley's article, "Evil Under the Sun," in the spring house program, available online at [coc.ca/Publications](http://coc.ca/Publications).

*A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi* is generously underwritten in part by Riki Turofsky and Charles Petersen.

Production Co-sponsors



# THE OPERA EXCHANGE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO OPERA

## A Wilde Time: Zemlinsky's *A Florentine Tragedy*

Sunday, April 22, 2012  
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

International experts from the University of Toronto and Princeton University offer insight into the wild and witty world of Alexander Zemlinsky's diabolical opera *A Florentine Tragedy*. In addition to dynamic lectures and audience Q&A periods, this half-day symposium features a discussion with director Catherine Malfitano and *Opera Canada* editor, Wayne Gooding.

Walter Hall, Faculty of Music,  
University of Toronto,  
80 Queen's Park Cres.

**10 a.m.** Welcome and introductory remarks

**10:10 – 10:40 a.m.** Ted Chamberlin, University of Toronto, *To Finish What He Never Began: Oscar Wilde and A Florentine Tragedy*

**10:40 – 11:15 a.m.** Christopher Hailey, Princeton N.J., *Finding Zemlinsky*

**11:15 a.m.** Coffee Break

**11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.** Sherry Lee, University of Toronto, *A Viennese Tragedy: Zemlinsky Composes Wilde*

**12:15 – 1 p.m.** Catherine Malfitano and Wayne Gooding in conversation

### Tickets \$23

Student & Faculty discounts available; **FREE** for UofT Faculty of Music students with valid student card & photo ID

For program details and tickets, call 416-363-8231 or visit [coc.ca/Explore](http://coc.ca/Explore).

The Opera Exchange is presented in partnership with:



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MUSIC



The Opera Exchange is generously supported by the Jackman Humanities Institute.

# MYTH MANI

## ZHANG HUAN'S SEMELE

By CARLY ANDERSON



In *Semele*, Zhang incorporates several of his past works into the set, including the temple bell, shown, which recalls "Peace Bell" (2001) and "100 Sages in a Bamboo Forest" (2008) which audiences will see when the temple is transformed into Semele's palace during the aria "Endless Pleasures, Endless Love." The COC presents *Semele* in co-production with Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie. A scene from Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, 2009. Photo: Karl Forster

Chinese artist Zhang Huan rose to prominence on the international art scene in the 1990s with his iconoclastic and visceral "body experiments," which recorded his body in extreme states of being. His first performances were a mixture of masochism and Taoist tests, which dealt with the vulnerability and fragility of corporeal experience. A classically trained painter, Mr. Zhang's practice evolved to embrace more traditional forms of artistic creation including large-scale sculpture and painting. For his 2001 symbolic self-portrait "Peace Bell," he created a large bell based on Tibetan temple models and inscribed it with the names of several generations of his ancestors. Beside it, a detailed cast of his body is suspended horizontally. The bell is rung when the artist's effigy crashes into it head first, and the artist and the bell become one through an act of apparent violence. The common thread in Zhang's work is the paradoxical nature of self-inflicted pain and the tension between physical transgression and the Buddhist-inspired quest for peace and enlightenment.

*Semele* (1743) – Zhang's first directorial and design foray into lyric theatre – was composed by George Frideric Handel with a libretto by William Congreve as adapted from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Daughter of the Theban King Cadmus, Semele is betrothed to the mortal Prince Athamas, but she is in love with the god Jupiter. His wife, Juno, having learned that her husband has built a palace for Semele, unleashes a plot to undo her. In a departure from the Ovidian myth, Juno calls upon Somnus, god of sleep, to cast Semele's sister Ino into a deep sleep. Juno transforms into Ino, takes advantage of Semele's naiveté, and plants the seeds of doubt that bring about Semele's self-destruction. A covetous Semele offers Jupiter her body in return for immortality. Jupiter concedes and the mortal Semele is consumed by the god's fire. Zhang infuses this Greco-Roman myth with eastern iconography and philosophy, the centrepiece of which is a 450-year-old Ming Dynasty ancestral temple that Zhang discovered in a small town several hours west of Shanghai.



*Semele* concludes with the haunting image of widow Ruan Jinmei created in the style of Zhang's series of "ash paintings," in which he paints with ash collected from temples around Shanghai to create vivid portraiture. Zhang considers the ash immaterial, a kind of collective soul or memory. Photos: Zhang Huan

# FEST:



lighting design by Wolfgang Göebbel into both a marriage altar and Semele's palace. The grandeur of the ornate wooden temple is complemented by Chinese-born fashion designer Han Feng's luxurious costumes, made with colourful and patterned silks that recall traditional Chinese theatre, paired with Baroque tailoring. Zhang successfully interweaves facets of Eastern and Western cultures and plays off the dualities, creating a narrative that is as contemporary as it is classical, and as much a part of Roman mythology as it is a story about human beings.



Zhang Huan

Prior to the production's 2009 debut at Théâtre de la Monnaie, Zhang said: "The fact that the roots of pain introduced hundreds of years ago in a Western opera reappear in the East, in the fate of a single peasant family in the countryside, can make us continually ponder the redemption of humanity."<sup>3</sup> Throughout *Semele*, Zhang weaves a multitude of narratives – the classical myth, the peasant family and his own personal iconography – all of which creates a story that is wholly different than what has preceded it.

Zhang has replaced the figure of Jupiter (traditionally signified by his white beard and lightning bolt) with the symbolic Chinese dragon.

The opera does not conclude with Bacchanalian revelry and the marriage of Ino and Athamas, but instead with the image of the beautiful widow, Mrs. Ruan, mirrored back at us. In Zhang's interpretation of *Semele*, the stress is not on the mythic. It is scaled back to focus on the human element – the single person. The mythic and the mundane, the sacred and the banal become one, and the myth is made manifest in our final glimpse of Ruan's reflection. ■

The disassembly and transportation of the temple to Zhang's factory-sized Shanghai studio is documented in a video, which plays during the opera's overture. In the video we learn that during the excavation of the temple, Zhang discovered several domestic relics including the diary of a man who lived in the temple about 20 years ago. The diary tells the story of the man's beautiful wife, Ruan Jinmei, who was unfaithful to him. "A majority of the diary is written about his love and hate for his wife, and his sense of responsibility and helplessness for his family,"<sup>1</sup> notes Zhang. In the end, the man murdered one of her lovers, resulting in his arrest and subsequent execution by firing squad.

Zhang was intrigued by the story's similarity to the Ovidian myth and in a 2009 interview with *The New York Times* relayed: "I was amazed how this tale out of contemporary China was like the Greek tragedy, and it inspired me to do the production."<sup>2</sup> The central backdrop of this production – the ancestral temple – transforms through the incredible

For further insight into *Semele*, please read Eric Domville's article, "*Semele*: Transformations," in the spring house program, available online at [coc.ca/Publications](http://coc.ca/Publications).

1. "Assimilating *Semele*" by Andrew Yang from the September 2009 issue of *Modern Painters*. [www.artinfo.com/news/story/32375/assimilating-semele/](http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/32375/assimilating-semele/)
2. "Lustful Opera Censored, Befuddles Chinese" by Andrew Jacobs for the October 25, 2011 issue of *The New York Times*. [www.nytimes.com/2010/10/26/world/asia/26beijing.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/26/world/asia/26beijing.html)
3. "Assimilating *Semele*" by Andrew Yang, *Modern Painters*

*Semele* Production Sponsor



# YOUTH OPERA LAB: *SEMELE*

Youth Opera Lab is a program for 16- to 21-year-olds that considers the multifariousness of opera and introduces young people to the art form through different avenues of interest. On April 28, 2012, 30 young adults, selected on the quality of their response to an online application, will have the opportunity to engage with Zhang's vision. The lab will focus on the contemporary artist's engagement with Handel's classic opera and will offer opportunities for discussion with members of the COC's creative and production team. Candidates will also watch a portion of the evening's rehearsal.

**Youth Opera Lab:** *Semele* is the third in a series of three programs. Applications are available online at [coc.ca/Explore](http://coc.ca/Explore) until Monday, April 9, 2012. The 2012/2013 series will be posted online in late August.

The COC presents *Semele* in co-production with Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie. A scene from Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, 2009. Photo: Karl Forster



## EAST MEETS WEST A Cultural Extravaganza

In anticipation of Asian Heritage Month in May and our opening performance of director Zhang Huan's *Semele*, the COC has teamed up with the Chinese Cultural Centre, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts to showcase the Chinese programming that all four institutions are presenting in Toronto this spring. Join us for an exquisite display of live music, vocal, acrobatic and dance performances courtesy of Toronto's major cultural players. Sign up for our *eOpera* newsletter to learn more.

**Thursday, May 3, 2012 6:30 p.m.**  
**FREE ADMISSION**

Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto  
5183 Sheppard Ave. E., Toronto  
416-292-9293 • [cccg.org](http://cccg.org)

### Upcoming Events\*

May 5 to August 19  
Zhang Huan: Memory Doors and Ash Paintings – Art Gallery of Ontario

May 9 to 26  
*Semele* (Director: Zhang Huan) – Canadian Opera Company

May 12 – 3:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.  
National Chinese Acrobats with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony – Sony Centre for the Performing Arts



\*Program information is subject to change

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

IN THIS RECURRING FEATURE WE SHINE THE SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS OF THE COC COMMUNITY WHO MAKE EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE COMPANY'S ARTISTIC PROJECTS.

## SAM REA'S ENDURING GENEROSITY HELPS ENSEMBLE STUDIO ARTISTS

Because training without practice is fundamentally incomplete, the COC makes it a priority to give young Canadian opera professionals plenty of opportunities to perform. We are delighted to continue this practice in the spring with a performance of Handel's *Semele* on May 23. Being cast in a mainstage performance is an incomparable hands-on experience for the young artists of the Ensemble Studio, one that will serve them well as they pursue careers in a highly competitive international environment. This Ensemble Studio performance owes much to a very significant commitment from the Estate of Samuel A. Rea. We are immensely grateful for this bequest, which builds on more than three decades of generous philanthropic support from Samuel A. Rea and his wife, Wendy J. Thompson.



2011/2012 COC Ensemble Studio Members, third row (l - r): Christopher Enns, Adrian Kramer; second row (l - r): Head of Ensemble Studio Liz Upchurch, Mireille Asselin, Neil Craighead, Timothy Cheung, Ambur Braid; first row (l - r): Simone Osborne, Jacqueline Woodley, Philippe Sly, Jenna Douglas, Rihab Chaieb. (Absent: Ileana Montalbetti). Photo: Chris Hutcheson

**Ensemble Studio performance of *Semele* • MAY 23 AT 7:30 P.M.**  
All tickets \$22 and \$55 • Visit [coc.ca/PerformancesAndTickets](http://coc.ca/PerformancesAndTickets)

## CONGRATULATIONS EARLAINE COLLINS!



Earlaine Collins and Russell Braun at the COC's *Love from Afar* opening night party. Photo: Dave Cox

This winter, longtime COC Golden Circle member Earlaine Collins was delighted to discover that she would be receiving the 2012 Governor General Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts. We at the COC couldn't be prouder to count Earlaine as one of our most devoted supporters. For over 32 years, Earlaine has been an incredibly valuable member of the COC family. She was part of the COC Board for 14 years, and has remained active since her retirement in 2010, giving her time and enthusiasm to initiatives that could not have been accomplished without her help. All arts organizations need champions like Earlaine, and we're thrilled that the Governor General Awards has recognized her outstanding contributions to us and all the other organizations that she has volunteered with over the years. Earlaine receives the award in Ottawa on May 5 at the National Arts Centre, and, word is, COC favourite baritone Russell Braun will make an appearance. Congratulations Earlaine!

## GLEAMING VOICES, SPARKLING JEWELS

Canadian jewellery designer John de Jong has been an avid opera lover and COC subscriber for years. This season he went above and beyond his support of the company by generously lending the COC some of his unique jewellery. In October, de Jong provided a stunning amethyst bead and diamond necklace paired with earrings for mezzo-soprano Susan Graham (*Iphigenia in Tauris*), who wore the combination during her appearance at the *Opera Canada Awards - The Rubies*. Later that month at *Operanation 8: A Muse Ball*, de Jong outfitted host Melissa Greló (CP24) with his one-of-a-kind carved jade, blue sapphire and diamond earrings. And most recently, JdJ lent another of his creations to soprano Julie Makerov (*Tosca*) for her concert in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre on February 14, 2012.



JdJ

Julie Makerov at the Four Seasons Centre, wearing a JdJ necklace and earrings. Photo: Tracy Kay

# TOGETHER, WE ACHIEVE MORE

Our patrons know better than anyone that opera depends on the efforts of countless individuals. From the collaborative work of the original composers and librettists, to the present-day creative teams putting together exceptional performances, success in opera has always been a matter of collective endeavour.

The same is true of our fundraising efforts – they depend on key collaborations designed to increase the impact of individual commitments. Bearing that in mind, every season we reach out to our community

with the Year-End Matching Appeal, inviting our patrons to make a gift that will be matched, dollar-for-dollar – in effect doubling your support.

The COC’s creative and artistic achievements are made possible, in no small part, by the invaluable support of our loyal subscribers and donors.

The collaborative spirit of philanthropy continues this year with the Year-End Campaign, which allows all gifts received by June 30, 2012 to be matched in value.

**For more information or to make a donation to the Year-End Matching Appeal, please contact Christie Darville ([christied@coc.ca](mailto:christied@coc.ca)/416-306-2375) or visit [coc.ca/Support](http://coc.ca/Support).**

## A HISTORY OF SUCCESS

LAST 10 YEARS  
**\$2,178,000**  
Net Raised

2010/2011 SEASON  
**\$253,045**  
Net Raised

2011/2012 SEASON  
**It's All Up To You!**

Thank you for playing a part in the success of the COC, and please consider making a donation that will help write the future of your opera company.

## FORE-SOME FUN! KPMG OPERA GOLF CLASSIC

The KPMG Opera Golf Classic takes place this year on Monday, June 4, 2012. The Scarborough Golf and Country Club will welcome over 100 participants for a memorable day at this prestigious and historic venue (for more information visit [www.scarborogolf.com](http://www.scarborogolf.com)). 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. There will be a full lunch before an invigorating day on the course, followed by a gourmet cocktail reception and dinner.

With many sponsors returning year after year, the KPMG Opera Golf Classic is one of the more popular events on

the circuit, and known for high quality – a true golfer’s tournament. Participants play their own ball, and the light-hearted competitiveness makes for a fun and enjoyable day. For just \$5,000 you and three other guests can partake in this fun-filled day as a foursome!

Title Sponsor



For more information about the event and how to donate, please contact Tracy Briggs, Special Events Manager, at 416-306-2305/[tracyb@coc.ca](mailto:tracyb@coc.ca).



# ENJOY THE PERFORMANCE



JAGUAR LAND ROVER IS PROUD TO BE THE OFFICIAL AUTOMOTIVE  
SPONSOR OF THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY



RECENTLY AT THE COC

# WORKING HARD

## LOVE FROM AFAR OPENING NIGHT PARTY



Elegant platters of Moroccan hors d'oeuvres marked the entrance to the *Love from Afar* opening night party as hundreds of guests flocked to the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre following the February 2 performance. Guests sipped The Balvenie single malt Scotch whisky while COC General Director Alexander Neef presented gifts and flowers to the cast and creative team of Kaija Saariaho's opera. Also

there to celebrate Ms Saariaho's premiere were the Canadian Friends of Finland Foundation, including administrative attaché to the Finnish Embassy, Sari Liestala.

We are grateful to the many sponsors who helped make possible *Love from Afar*: BMO Financial Group, Anne and Tony Arrell, Earlaine Collins, J. Hans Kluge, Marjorie and Roy Linden, and Dr. David Stanley-Porter.



Top photo (l - r): COC General Director Alexander Neef, chorus master Sandra Horst, soprano Erin Wall, conductor Johannes Debus, concertmaster Marie Bérard, creative associate Julie Hamelin, composer Kaija Saariaho, director Daniele Finzi Pasca, mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabó and baritone Russell Braun. Photo: Dave Cox  
Bottom photo: *Love from Afar* opening night party, 2012. Photo: Dave Cox

# PLAYING HARD

## KAIJA SAARIAHO IN TORONTO



As part of the run-up to the Canadian premiere of *Love from Afar*, acclaimed Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho dropped by the Duke of York on January 31 for Opera 101, our popular discussion series (photo far right). She was joined by *Love from Afar*'s leading singers, soprano Erin Wall (left) and mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabó (right). She was also on hand for our lunchtime Free Concert Series on February 2, which featured young artists from the

COC's Ensemble Studio (main photo). Jacqueline Woodley, Mireille Asselin and Rihab Chaieb performed selections from Ms Saariaho's most powerful vocal works, giving incandescent performances that deeply moved the composer. She was extremely impressed by the calibre of the singing and remarked that she had never experienced such emotion at hearing *From the Grammar of Dreams* performed live.



Main photo (l - r): Jacqueline Woodley, Mireille Asselin, Kaija Saariaho and Rihab Chaieb. Photo: Karen Reeves



## RACONTEURS: A NIGHT OF STORYTELLING FOR THE TALES OF HOFFMANN

Raconteurs, a monthly storytelling event held at **No One Writes to the Colonel** (460 College St.), brings people together to share their comic, tragic, and personal experiences. This March they partnered with the COC to host two specially-themed evenings in anticipation of *The Tales*

*of Hoffmann*, an opera based on three fantastic stories by the German writer E. T. A. Hoffmann. Attendees were invited onstage to wax lyrical about "The Muse" and "Love Lost." Fueled by the convivial energy of the audience and a specialty "Hoffmann" cocktail\*, storytellers included members of

Toronto's arts community and the COC, including interim digital marketing co-ordinator, Olga Kwak (centre) and COC Volunteer Speakers Bureau member, John Rutherford (right). They spun tales worthy of the horror-meister himself.

\*Try it yourself! This cocktail recipe is available online at [coc.ca/Parlando](http://coc.ca/Parlando).

# JOHN RELYEA

## FOUR VILLAINS... FOUR SIGNATURES

By SUZANNE VANSTONE

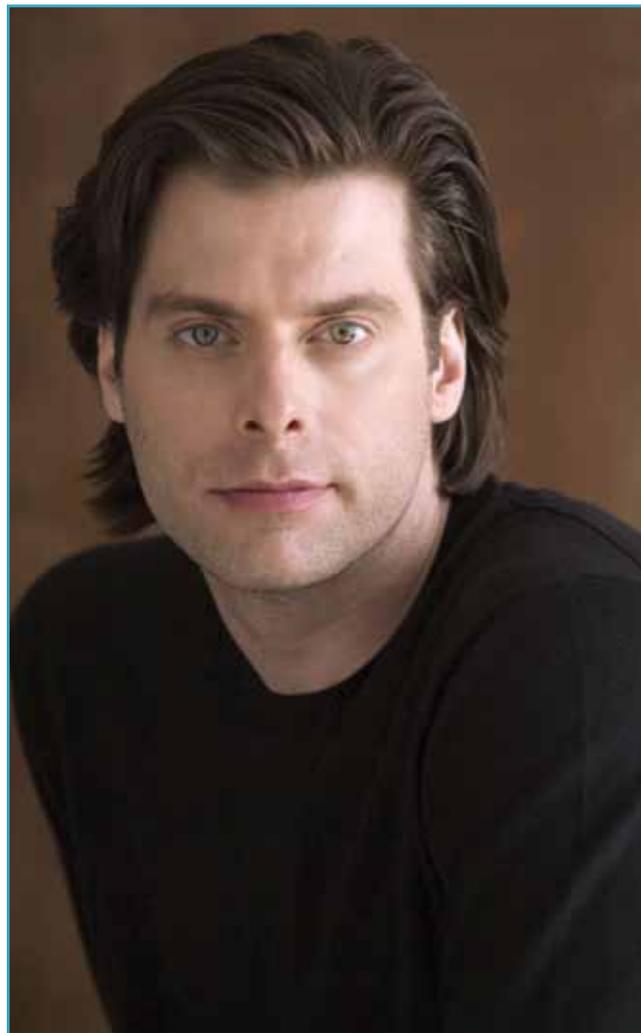
Although opera is certainly a worldwide artform and touches millions of people, the actual pool of accomplished singers is a fairly small one. Therefore to have two generations of Canadian singers – one who has graced our stage and one who is about to – is especially thrilling. I refer to two bass-baritones – Gary Relyea who has performed with the COC on many occasions, and his son, John Relyea, who is about to make his debut with us. And what better way for John to make his debut than in not one... but four roles! The villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

John Relyea says that although operatic music was always in his home – his mother Anna Tamm-Relyea was also a professional singer – it was not really on his radar screen. As a young teenager, he played guitar and sang in various rock bands. Opera and rock may not immediately appear to be kissing cousins, but a lot of operatic singers have come from that background. Relyea says, “I think there are two elements they have in common: it’s very much larger than life and also there’s a really visceral outlet to it, not just for the audience but the performer too. It’s mutual. The audience is drawn for a lot of the same reasons. They get to live their life on a higher level for a little while, and experience raw human emotions.”

Relyea continues, “One day my Dad said, ‘Why don’t you try singing a few notes?’ He was very sneaky and

slowly roped me in,” he laughs. “But I noticed right away that the genetics had put it all there. It was a very easy, natural thing to fall into, and it slowly became more of my focus.” Relyea’s father taught him for the first few years and they still touch base and compare notes. “I always get the call every month or two saying, ‘Singing – I’ve finally figured it out!’ And I’ve been getting that call for the last 15 years! It’s definitely a life’s work because your perspective, your life, your body changes – your whole life experience changes.

“When I started in opera, I became very fascinated by the theatrical element. Yes, I had seen my dad perform when I was a kid, but it’s another thing to experience that for yourself. Of course the singing is fun and enjoyable and one of the main elements, but I love the idea of building a character and acting.”



John Relyea. Photo: Dario Acosta

In the opera, the poet Hoffmann, given to drink, spins dark tales of his unhappy affairs with three women – the mechanical doll Olympia, the fragile singer Antonia and the courtesan Giulietta. The four villains, similarly

**“THE CONTRASTS OF THE FOUR CHARACTERS REFLECT THEMSELVES NATURALLY IN THE VOICE. WHAT I ENJOY ABOUT THESE ROLES IS YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE YOUR VOICE THROUGH A LOT OF DIFFERENT COLOURS IN ONE NIGHT AND I THINK THAT’S HEALTHY.”**

personifying evil, impede Hoffmann's attempts at finding happiness. Relyea loves playing these roles. "With these villains, for instance, there's so much you can play around and experiment with. They are very different colours; the villains have different signatures. You have Lindorf, who is sort of an aristocratic villain - he's very much cool and collected and his power is in his mind, cunning, and status. Then you have Coppélius who is completely off the wall and rather comical until the end when you see that he has a psychotic rage. And then Dr. Miracle is plain creepy all around. He's probably the scariest of them all. And once you get to Dapertutto and Giulietta, everything becomes much more sensual and dangerous - it's there quietly in the background. In that act, to me, the heroine has reached the villain's level. Giulietta is really on par with Dapertutto in terms of how dangerous they both are.

"The contrasts of the four characters reflect themselves naturally in the voice. What I enjoy about these roles is you have the opportunity to take your voice through a lot of different colours in one night and I think that's healthy. For me it's really subconscious that the changes in the voice go inextricably with the changes in the character. Some teachers might advise not to change your voice, but my voice likes to keep freeing up different areas at different points in the evening. The



vocal challenge is in pacing yourself. Antonia's act is very dramatic and then you reach Giulietta's and it is higher and more lyrical. You have to be kind to your voice despite the fact that you're singing high and loud for that act."

Relyea continues, "I see *Hoffmann* as an escape into a fantasy world, whereas a lot of operas you get pinned in by the libretto and it can be much harder to play around with the setting and the imagination. Of course you can only stretch it so far, but you can push the boundaries with *Hoffmann* and it doesn't step on anybody's toes. In fact you can really encourage that

as much as possible. It has a complete set of emotions and dramatic moods. I always like pieces where you can juxtapose great comedy and craziness with some real tragedy and theatre. In the end it's all these elements living side by side."

Relyea looks forward to performing with his fellow cast members at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. "I know Erin [Wall] who is singing Antonia. A year ago I sang with Andriana Chuchman in a *Messiah* in Toronto. Recently I performed with Russell Thomas in New York - he's a wonderful singer. And I'm looking forward to working with David Pomeroy for the first time, as well as Keri Alkema. I have seen the new opera house, but not been in it. It looks incredible and I've heard nothing but great things about it. People all over the world are talking about it. It's an amazing house, worth the wait. And I think Alexander's been doing a great job with programming as well." ■

For further insights into *The Tales of Hoffmann*, please read Suzanne Vanstone's interview, "Fantasy and Humanity," with COC Music Director Johannes Debus in the spring house program, available online at [coc.ca/Publications](http://coc.ca/Publications).

Mr. Relyea's performance in *The Tales of Hoffmann* is generously sponsored by Kris Vikmanis.



The COC presents *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Scenes from Vlaamse Opera's production, 2000. Photos: Kurt Van der Elst

# ENERGETIC ENSEMBLE STUDIO!



COC Ensemble Studio and Atelier Lyrique (Opéra de Montréal).  
Photo: Chris Hutcheson

## COLLABORATIONS: A FREE CONCERT SERIES PERFORMANCE

On February 7, 2012, singers from the COC Ensemble Studio and the young artist program of Opéra de Montréal (Atelier lyrique) joined forces in a program of operatic arias and ensembles. The COC and Opéra de Montréal are proud to present this intriguing concert opportunity every year to Toronto and Montreal music fans as both companies offer premier training programs for young opera professionals. These collaborative one-hour concerts present a vivid portrait of the musicality, vitality, and astonishing virtuosity of these up-and-coming voices in the opera world. In their third joint recital in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, eight singers

accompanied by Ensemble pianists Jenna Douglas and Timothy Cheung showcased their talent to a packed house. Among the performers this year were Atelier members Philip Kalmanovitch, Isaiah Bell, Emma Parkinson and Aidan Ferguson, and Ensemble members Jacqueline Woodley, Philippe Sly, Ileana Montalbetti and Mireille Asselin. We thank all the collaborators for yet another successful and rousing performance, and look forward to next year's concert!

## A SPECIAL SEMELE PERFORMANCE FEATURING THE COC ENSEMBLE STUDIO! Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. All tickets \$22 and \$55 [coc.ca/PerformancesandTickets](http://coc.ca/PerformancesandTickets)

Don't miss your chance to witness the stars of tomorrow in a mainstage performance of *Semele* at an exceptionally accessible price!

During the 2011/2012 COC spring season, the members of COC's Ensemble Studio understudy and rehearse with the mainstage cast of Handel's *Semele* under the direction of conductor Rinaldo Alessandrini and director Zhang Huan. Wednesday, May 23, 2012, presents an incredible opportunity to experience these exciting young singers performing the principal roles in their own mainstage performance of *Semele* with the full COC Orchestra and Chorus.

This Ensemble Studio performance of *Semele* has been generously underwritten in part by Wendy J. Thompson and the late Samuel A. Rea.

The Ensemble Studio performance is sponsored by ARIAS.

## LOOK ONLINE at COC.CA

### ALEXANDER NEEF

Keep up with busy General Director Alexander Neef. Follow him on twitter @alexanderncoc and on his blog at [coc.ca/Neef](http://coc.ca/Neef).

### PARLANDO: THE COC BLOG

For all COC news, including behind-the-scenes reporting, productions in progress, Q&As with the stars and much more, visit [coc.ca/Parlando](http://coc.ca/Parlando).

### PUBLICATIONS ONLINE

All our house programs and issues of *Prelude* are posted online! New this spring, read Suzanne Vanstone's interview with Johannes Debus on *The Tales of Hoffmann*, enjoy Gavin Plumley's article on *A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi*, and learn about our exquisite production of *Semele* from Eric Domville, long-time member of the COC Volunteer Speakers Bureau. It's all at [coc.ca/Publications](http://coc.ca/Publications).

### HONEYBEES

See what our busy bees are up to at [coc.ca/HoneyBees](http://coc.ca/HoneyBees).

### COC RADIO

Enjoy listening guides and podcasts for *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi*, *Semele* and all 2012/2013 season operas. Also online are CBC broadcasts of COC productions. Listen to podcasts with COC artists and so much more at [coc.ca/Radio](http://coc.ca/Radio).



### E-CARDS

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### FREE CONCERT SERIES

The Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre continues this spring with special performances by the artists of the COC Ensemble

Studio, BoucharDanse, members of the COC Orchestra, among many others. To see the full schedule and learn more about the artists, visit [coc.ca/FreeConcerts](http://coc.ca/FreeConcerts).

# THE OPERA SHOP

## THIS SPRING, ALEXANDER NEEF RECOMMENDS...

### **The Tales of Hoffmann**

E. T. A. Hoffmann, Penguin Classics, \$18.50 including tax.

Eight of Hoffmann's best-known tales from this collection – among them *Mademoiselle de Scudery*, *Doge* and *Dogaressa* and *The Sandman*, which forms the basis for the Olympia act in Offenbach's opera.



## THIS SPRING WE RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING RECORDINGS FROM UNIVERSAL CLASSICS:



### **The Tales of Hoffmann**

Decca. L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Richard Bonyngue, conductor. Plácido Domingo, Joan Sutherland, Gabriel Bacquier, Huguette Tourangeau. \$52.75 including tax.

In the title role, the young Plácido Domingo leaves nothing to be desired, singing with such careful attention to detail that he makes Hoffmann come alive. The four great loves of his life – Olympia, Giulietta, Antonia and Stella – find a supreme interpreter in Joan Sutherland. What other soprano of the recent past could handle everything from the coloratura intricacies of Olympia to the harrowing drama of Antonia with such equal mastery?



### **Il Trittico**

Decca. Orchestra and Chorus of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Bruno Bartoletti, conductor. Mirella Freni, Leo Nucci, Juan Pons, Roberto Alagna. \$55 including tax.

Authenticity is front and centre as these Florentine forces play Puccini's quintessentially Florentine opera. Add in the great Italian soprano Mirella Freni's exquisite rendition of one of Puccini's most beloved soprano arias, "O mio babbino caro," and you are left with a most satisfying version of the sparkling comedy that is *Gianni Schicchi* (with the added bonus of the other two operas, which make up *Il Trittico: Il Tabarro* and *Suor Angelica*).



### **Semele**

Decca. Orchestra La Scintilla, Ambrosian Opera Chorus, William Christie, conductor. Cecilia Bartoli, Charles Workman, Liliana Nikiteanu, Birgit Remmert, Isabel Rey, Anton Scharinger. \$25.75 (DVD), \$32.25 (Blu-ray) including tax.

This is celebrated Canadian director Robert Carsen's production from Zurich starring none other than Cecilia Bartoli in the title role, which suits her lithe, flexible voice like a glove. Her coloratura is emotive and precise in the famously self-regarding aria, "Myself I shall adore" while her legato is utterly smooth in the touching plaint, "O sleep, why dost thou leave me?" A fun, irreverent take on Handel's creation, which, after all, was famously labelled at its premiere as "no oratorio, but a bawdy opera!"

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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.





# ALAN HELD

## A DOUBLE BILL OF SUN AND SHADOW

By JON KAPLAN

Alan Held's two roles in the spring Canadian Opera Company season are as different as night and day. That contrast is reflected metaphorically and literally in the paired one-acts, Alexander Zemlinsky's *Eine Florentinische Tragödie* (*A Florentine Tragedy*) and Giacomo Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, in which the American baritone makes his COC debut.

The rarely performed Zemlinsky, based on an unfinished play by Oscar Wilde, focuses on a love triangle involving the merchant Simone (Held), his wife Bianca and the princely Guido. Taking place at night, the action begins as Simone returns unexpectedly to his Florentine home and finds Bianca entertaining Guido. A cat-and-mouse game leads to violence and a surprise ending.

The better-known Puccini comic opera, written as the final section of the composer's three-part *Il Trittico*, takes place against the sunny backdrop of a beautiful day in Florence.

Schicchi, a fun-loving trickster with a quick wit, agrees to help the family of the recently deceased Buoso Donati gain the dead man's inheritance, but has a few tricks up his substantial sleeve. By the end, the good and clever characters – including Held's Schicchi – are rewarded and the nasty ones punished.

The two operas premiered within a year of each other, the Zemlinsky in 1917 and the Puccini in 1918. "That dark/light distinction is certainly there in the stories," says Held from London, where he performed at Royal Opera House Covent Garden in Dvořák's *Rusalka* before coming to Toronto. "But it's also present in the colouring of the music, which in one opera is German romantic, with generally heavier orchestration, and in the other Italian *verismo*, which is lighter and with a quicksilver feel.

Below: Preliminary set maquette for *A Florentine Tragedy* by set designer Wilson Chin. Opposite Page: Preliminary sketch of Simone in *A Florentine Tragedy* by costume designer, Terese Wadden.



“Also, Simone and Schicchi are such different people that my vocal sound will have to be different. Because of the orchestration in the Puccini, I can play with my voice and characterize Schicchi in a number of ways. Simone, on the other hand, is a real singing piece; the music is Straussian

the Zemlinsky, Schicchi’s a likable man, a loving father who can get along with anyone. You wouldn’t invite Simone over for dinner, but Schicchi is the guy everyone knows would be a great wedding guest!”

## SCHICCHI IS “ONE OF THE PINNACLE BARITONE ROLES. I’M KNOWN FOR MY SERIOUS WORK IN STRAUSS AND WAGNER, BUT I CUT MY TEETH ON COMEDY AND I CAN’T WAIT TO GET BACK TO THIS PART.”

in its thickness, and I can’t lighten my voice to make an effect without being lost in the orchestral sound. Still, it’s a tonally beautiful work and I don’t know why it’s not presented more often.”

*A Florentine Tragedy* is one of two Zemlinsky operas inspired by Wilde, the other being *Der Zwerg*, an adaptation of *The Birthday of the Infanta*. Both are sinister in tone, with irony present in the text as well as the music. At times the melodies and rich poetry are reminiscent of another Wilde-inspired opera, Richard Strauss’s *Salome*. When you hear Simone describing his goods, you might be reminded of Herod trying to tempt Salome away from desiring the head of Jochanaan (John the Baptist).

Held understands the similarities between the Zemlinsky and the Strauss – the lush imagery, “the shimmering, seductive strings” – Jochanaan being one of the roles in the baritone’s repertoire. He’ll sing it next season when he returns to the COC, along with Kurwenal in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*.

“Simone feels trapped in his life,” offers the singer. “He knows he’s not respected by those in power because he’s a merchant, yet he feels protective of his business. He’s the character who sings most of the time during the hour-long opera, presenting a lot of exposition, almost always about his money and his work.”

While Held tackles *A Florentine Tragedy* for the first time, he sang in *Gianni Schicchi* while at college. “Back then I sang the bass role, a character coincidentally named Simone. When I heard that another school in the area was also staging it, I went to scout them out and see if their production was better than ours. All I remember was that a young soprano named Dawn Upshaw was playing Lauretta, who sings ‘O mio babbino caro.’”

Held considers Schicchi “one of the pinnacle baritone roles,” and remembers his trepidation performing it in Italy in 1993. “I’m known for my serious work in Strauss and Wagner,” he admits, “but I cut my teeth on comedy and I can’t wait to get back to this part. In contrast to Simone in

What the two have in common, though, is that neither has much social standing in their respective Florentine worlds, the setting for both operas. “Both fight the establishment, Simone against Guido and Schicchi against the well-bred Donati family, who consider him a crude peasant, beneath them in the social structure. Each is a representative of the new breed of man who’s coming onto the scene, self-sufficient and able to stand up against those who think themselves superior simply by birth.”

Though his Schicchi is Puccini’s central character, the baritone knows that it’s Lauretta’s music that the audience will hum as they exit. “No matter how well I perform,” Held says with a characteristic hearty laugh, “Lauretta’s the one who captivates viewers. And they’re not the only ones: Schicchi’s been manipulated by his daughter many times before this. By the second measure of her aria, he’s lost and will give Lauretta anything she wants.”

The double bill, directed by Catherine Malfitano and conducted by Sir Andrew Davis, isn’t the first time that the baritone’s tackled two different productions in one night. He mentions a pairing of Béla Bartók’s *Bluebeard’s Castle* and Strauss’s *Elektra* – that would make for a heavy evening in the theatre – and remembers, after a lot of singing as Bluebeard, being thankful that his Orest in the Strauss didn’t appear until late in the opera.

“But I’m a stage animal and expect this current pairing to be a lot of fun. After the intensity of the Zemlinsky, it’ll be fun to jump into *Gianni Schicchi*. There’s a laugh in just about every line.” ■

For further insight into our double bill, please read Gavin Plumley’s article, “Evil Under the Sun,” in the spring house program, available online at [coc.ca/Publications](http://coc.ca/Publications).



*A Florentine Tragedy*/*Gianni Schicchi* is generously underwritten in part by Riki Turofsky and Charles Petersen.

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# COC OPERATOURS

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#### La Scala, Milan

#### VERDI *Rigoletto*

c. Gustavo Dudamel with Vittorio Grigolo, George Gagnidze and Elena Mosuc

#### WAGNER *Siegfried*

c. Daniel Barenboim with Lance Ryan, Juha Uusitalo, Nina Stemme and Anna Larsson

#### Le Fenice, Venice

#### VERDI *Otello*

c. Myung-Whun Chung d. Francesco Micheli

#### WAGNER *Tristan und Isolde*

c. Myung-Whun Chung d. Paul Curran

#### NEW YORK

March 3 - 7, 2013 (Four nights)

Three spectacular operas at the Met with fabulous casts to match.

#### VERDI *Don Carlo*

c. Lorin Maazel d. Nicholas Hytner with Vargas, Radvanovsky, Hvorostovsky, Furlanetto

#### ZANDONAI *Francesca da Rimini*

c. Marco Armiliato  
Not given at the Met since 1986. An episode from Dante's *Inferno*, with Eva-Maria Westbroek and Marcello Giordani as the tragic lovers.

#### WAGNER *Parsifal*

c. Daniele Gatti  
New production by François Girard, with Jonas Kaufmann, Katarina Dalayman, Peter Mattei, René Pape. Kaufmann's only appearance at the Met in the coming season.

COC CO-PRODUCTION

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To receive full tour and booking information (as it becomes available), please e-mail [operatours@golden.net](mailto:operatours@golden.net) or send a self-addressed and stamped envelope (#10 business-size) to:

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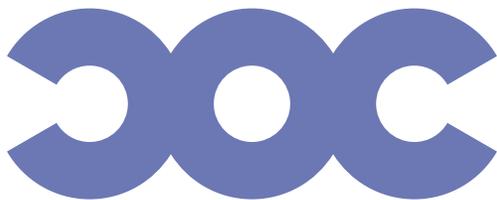
# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## SPRING 2012

### APRIL 2012

Mon	2	7:30 p.m.	<i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i> Working Rehearsal
Tue	3	12 p.m.	Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble*
Wed	4	12 p.m. 6 p.m.	Jacqueline Woodley, soprano* Opera 101, <i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i> . Duke of Westminster (77 Adelaide St. W.)
Thu	5	12 p.m.	Christopher Mokrzewski, piano*
Tue	10	12 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Trio Arkel (Marie Bérard, Teng Li, Winona Zelenka)* <i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i> Opening Performance
Thu	12	12 p.m. 7 p.m.	Bboyizm* COC Fine Wine Auction at the Design Exchange (Cocktails at 6 p.m.)
Sat	14	4:30 p.m.	<i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i>
Tue	17	12 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Canadian Music Competition Winners* <i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i> Working Rehearsal
Wed	18	6 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Opera 101: <i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i> Duke of Westminster (77 Adelaide St. W.) <i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i>
Thu	19	12 p.m.	BoucharDanse; Sylvie Bouchard, artistic director*
Sat	21	7:30 p.m.	<i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i>
Sun	22	10 a.m.	The Opera Exchange: "A Wilde Time: Zemlinsky's <i>A Florentine Tragedy</i> ." 80 Queen's Park Cres.
Tue	24	12 p.m.	Lauren Margison, vocals; Christopher Mokrzewski, piano*
Thu	26	12 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Jayne Stone* <i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i> Opening Performance
Fri	27	7:30 p.m.	<i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i>
Sat	28	5:30 p.m.	Youth Opera Lab: <i>Semele</i>
Mon	30	7:30 p.m.	<i>Semele</i> Working Rehearsal

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### MAY 2012

Tue	1	12 p.m.	Erin Wall, soprano; Sandra Horst, piano*
Wed	2	6 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Opera 101, <i>Semele</i> . Duke of Westminster (77 Adelaide St. W.) <i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i>
Thu	3	12 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Aradia Ensemble; Darbazi Georgian Choir* <i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i>
Sat	5	7:30 p.m.	<i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i>
Sun	6	2 p.m.	<i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i>
Tue	8	12 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Scott MacIsaac, piano* <i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i>
Wed	9	7:30 p.m.	<i>Semele</i> Opening Performance
Thu	10	12 p.m.	Artists of the COC Orchestra*
Fri	11	7:30 p.m.	<i>Semele</i>
Sat	12	4:30 p.m.	<i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i>
Sun	13	2 p.m.	<i>Semele</i>
Mon	14	7:30 p.m.	<i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i> Closing Performance
Tue	15	12 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Artists of the COC Orchestra* <i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i>
Wed	16	7:30 p.m.	<i>Semele</i>
Thu	17	12 p.m.	Adrian Kramer, baritone; Christopher Mokrzewski, piano*
Fri	18	7:30 p.m.	<i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i>
Sat	19	7:30 p.m.	<i>Semele</i>
Sun	20	2 p.m.	<i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i>
Tue	22	12 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Stephen R. Clarke, lecturer: "The English Tenor Singing Tradition Before Peter Pears"* <i>Semele</i>
Wed	23	7:30 p.m.	<i>Semele</i> Ensemble Studio Performance
Thu	24	12 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Sophia Perlman, vocals; Adrean Farrugia, piano* <i>Semele</i>
Fri	25	7:30 p.m.	<i>A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi</i> Closing Performance
Sat	26	4:30 p.m.	<i>Semele</i> Closing Performance
Tue	29	12 p.m.	Artists of the COC Orchestra*
Thu	31	12 p.m.	Toronto Summer Music Festival*

### JUNE 2012

Mon	4	10:30 a.m.	KPMG Opera Golf Classic at Scarboro Golf and Country Club
Tue	5	12 p.m.	Jacques Israelievitch, violin; Erica Goodman, harp*
Wed	6	12 p.m.	The Yiddish Swingtet*

\*These performances are part of the Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, supported by the Free Concert Series Endowment Fund, established in honour of Richard Bradshaw by an anonymous donor.

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CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY  
 PRODUCTION: *Florentine Tragedy* NAME: *Gun-Bot Berkemin*  
 SKETCH #: \_\_\_\_\_ CHARACTER: *Bianca*  
 SOURCE: \_\_\_\_\_

Costume swatch and preliminary sketch of Bianca in *A Florentine Tragedy* by costume designer, Terese Wadden.

# Prelude

*A gift to our friends*

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