PROGRAM

FALL 2015

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A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL DIRECTOR **ALEXANDER NEEF**

Welcome to a new season at the Canadian Opera Company! With a new beginning, we are also introducing a newly designed house program. This bigger, richer program gives everyone, from the most devoted to the most casual operagoer, up-to-date information about the COC. You'll find interviews with artists, features on the operas we're presenting, behind-the-scenes information on the productions as well as highlights from the company's special events, profiles of our donors, and stories about our education and outreach activities. Not only is the program provided to all ticket holders at the theatre, but it's also available on our website, coc.ca/Publications, at least one week before opening night.

A redesigned house program is not the only change you'll see this fall at the Four Seasons Centre. Under the Grand Staircase you will discover a newly created space, designed to offer new points of contact with your Company and the art form in general as well as interactive opportunities for engaging with our productions. In these early stages of implementation, we welcome your feedback as the space continues to evolve and develop over the course of the season.

I'm so pleased that we can open our 2015/2016 season with two new COC productions. We begin with a new production of the classic favourite, *La Traviata*. Arin Arbus, one of North America's most exciting theatre directors, has teamed up with designer/artist Cait O'Connor to create a visual feast. With a stunning cast and maestro Marco Guidarini conducting, it will be a musical treat as well.

Another highlight of the season that I'm especially proud of is the world premiere of a new Canadian opera, *Pyramus and Thisbe*. Gaspé native Barbara Monk Feldman's only opera delves into the emotional core of the Greco-Roman myth about lovers forced apart. It's a delicate, ephemeral piece that exists in a kind of suspended animation, poised on the threshold of action and stillness. *Pyramus and Thisbe* is paired with two short Monteverdi pieces creating a bold and fascinating program.

Finally, on November 3, join us for *Centre Stage*, our annual celebration of young Canadian talent. This vocal competition and search for the country's next opera stars features the most talented young singers in Canada, a full orchestra, and audience participation. There's nothing more exciting than seeing the future on stage!

I welcome you to our season as we explore 400 years of operatic brilliance together.

SANDRA HORST, COC CHORUS MASTER

"What better job could there be?"

BY GIANMARCO SEGATO

Chorus Master extraordinaire Sandra Horst estimates she has prepared the COC's critically acclaimed chorus for over 70 different operas since she took over its leadership in 1998. "It's outrageous!" she exclaims. That first season included a particularly chorus-heavy roster of operas including *Norma, Xerxes, Tosca, Il trovatore* and the world premiere of Randolph Peters' *The Golden Ass*. Sandra would be the first to admit "not many people start their music training thinking they're going to be an opera chorus master." Her beginnings in Saskatchewan didn't include much opera but the ubiquity of school and church choirs were definitely a sign of things to come. Her involvement with choirs continued at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, where she studied piano performance. There, she also began to accompany instrumentalists and singers—those collaborative experiences were so compelling that she soon realized "solo piano was perhaps not the most interesting thing!" This led to a master's degree in piano accompaniment at the New England Conservatory in Boston where she spent equal amounts of time playing for vocalists and instrumentalists. At the time, Sandra's husband Steven was a baritone in the COC Ensemble Studio, and they spent their summers at opera programs like Opera East where Sandra was increasingly drawn to collaborating with singers. Subsequently she spent time at New York City's prestigious Juilliard Opera Center, honing her skills in vocal coaching and playing for rehearsals. This led to the start of her long association with the COC when she became an apprentice coach with the Ensemble Studio in the fall of 1993.

It was at this stage of her training that Sandra was lucky to meet her most valued mentor, Donald Palumbo, currently chorus master at the Metropolitan Opera. During the 1990s, he held that position with the COC, and in the 1997/1998 season, the year before Sandra became full-time chorus master, their time with the company overlapped. Fortuitously, as it turned out, since it was a bit of a "baptism of fire—in the fall I did [chorus for] *Hansel and Gretel* and in the winter, *Cunning Little Vixen*—those were my first operas! They're both so all over the place with all those little kids and chickens!" That season, Sandra worked as Palumbo's assistant preparing the chorus for Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 (as part of the concert series the COC then presented at the North York Centre for the Performing Arts) as well as for *Madama Butterfly* and *Fidelio*: "I played for his rehearsals and followed him all around for those

three shows. I learned more in those two and a half months than I could ever have imagined and it was after that that [late COC General Director] Richard Bradshaw asked me to be chorus master. As part of the deal, the COC offered to send me to Chicago [Palumbo's next post was at Lyric Opera] to work with Donald, and I've continued to consult with him ever since. There are only a few operas that I've ever worked on before he has—then he calls me!"

Fifteen seasons later, Sandra's vast experience (she is also Director of Musical Studies for the University of Toronto's Opera Division and past chorus master at Opera Theatre of St. Louis) has granted her enviable insight into what distinguishes an opera chorus from other types of choral groups: "It's fascinating: with an amateur or church choir, because the singers are generally not professionals, they rely more on each other; they want to sound more like each other and that helps to achieve a blended sound. It's kind of the opposite with an opera chorus. I think the big distinction is that [all COC chorus members] are professional level singers so you can ask them to do things with the colour of their voices; certainly with their vibrato [the subtle, quick alternation between pitches that occurs when a voice is properly and naturally produced]—it can't be vibrato-less [the "white" or "straight" tone usually associated with church choirs]. They're trained to be solo singers so, although they're singing together, they're not trying to sound like the other voices. Yet, it's the collaborative approach that makes an opera chorus successful; when everyone's part of that team they can make a unified sound."

Given the dizzying variety of outstanding productions Sandra has worked on during her time at the COC, there have been many highlights, but when asked for her favourite, she does not hesitate to single out 2007's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, conducted by Richard Bradshaw and directed by Paul Curran. "That was the one set in a chicken factory, the first year we were in the new opera house. It was fantastic; the whole rehearsal process was so great; Richard Bradshaw was on fire. The entire team loved what they were doing so much; everything came together and that doesn't always happen." The COC's summer 2002 tour to the Edinburgh Festival with *Oedipus Rex/Symphony of Psalms* was also memorable: "we had rehearsed [Tchaikovsky's] *Queen of Spades* before going to Edinburgh and when we came back a few weeks later, we had to start staging it immediately—and nobody remembered any of it! There's just so much Russian in it and it was new for a lot of the chorus—oh, the fall of 2002 was a tough time!"

Although the majority of her work happens behind the scenes, a personal highlight for Sandra was her appearance out front, on the conductor's podium for one performance of Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims* in 2002. However, it is in conducting off-stage choruses where the chorus master most often must prove her mettle. In that regard, Sandra recounts: "I learned everything I know from Richard Bradshaw—you can't just go on your own, you have to know who's leading and who's following. The challenges are very much related to the natural delay between conductor and orchestra which are compounded by the delay from the sound monitor as well; with so much potential for delay, at a certain point, I just have to go for it and the conductor has to follow me—tricky, but I think it's fun!" Having taught his protégé the tricks of the trade, Richard Bradshaw often made surprise appearances backstage when he wasn't himself on the podium conducting, lending his voice to *Tosca*'s famous Act II offstage chorus: "all of a sudden he'd be in the very back, skulking around!"

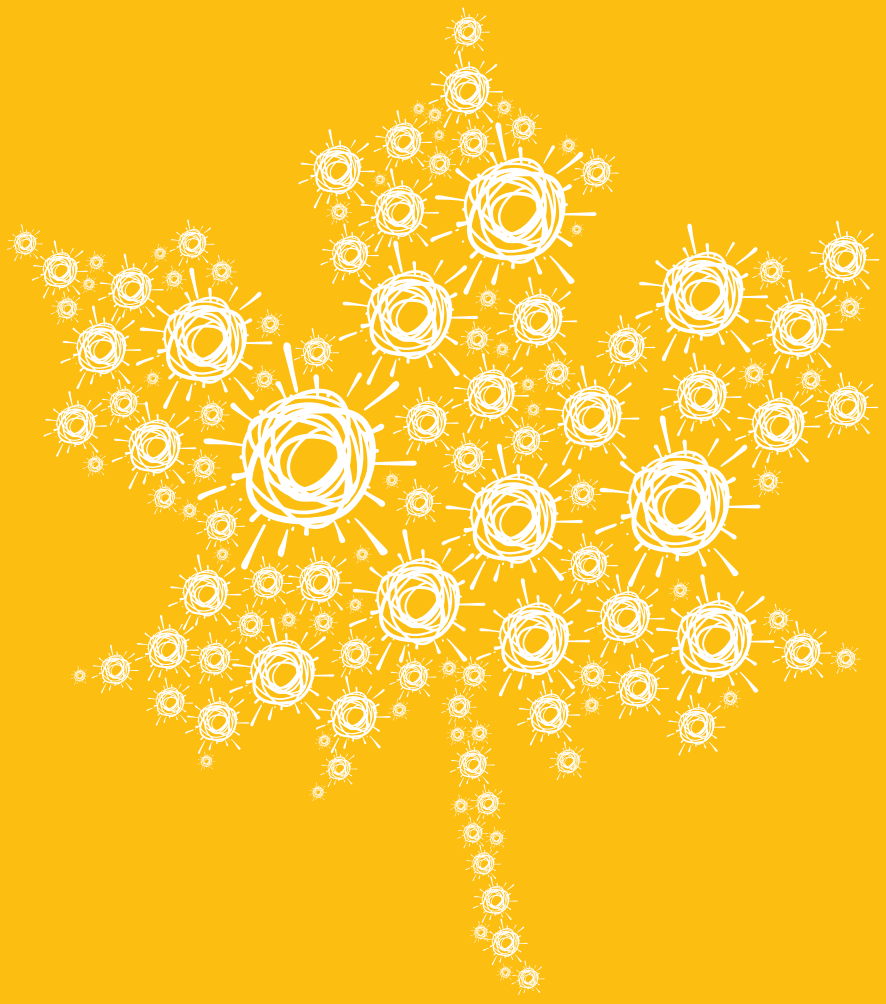
Reflecting on her time with the COC, Sandra flashes a broad smile: "It's been so, so good—the whole run of Russian repertoire; the Janáček cycle; *The Handmaid's Tale* [Poul Ruders' opera based on the iconic Margaret Atwood novel]... it's been great, it's been exciting; then the move to the new opera house... the chorus is fantastic; they work so hard; they love what they do—what better job could there be?"

Gianmarco Segato is Adult Programs Manager at the COC.

Opposite, top: A Horst highlight, the COC's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, 2007. Below: Seeing red with Sandra and the COC Chorus backstage after a performance of last season's hugely popular *Falstaff*.

Sandra Horst and the COC Chorus are generously underwritten by Tim and Frances Price

ONE NATION UNDER THE ARTS



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BIOGRAPHIES

Who's Who at the COC This Fall

PHILLIP ADDIS

Baritone (Stratford, ON)
Pyramus, *Pyramus and Thisbe*
Tancredi, *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*

COC DEBUT
Schaunard/Marcello, *La Bohème*, 2013

RECENT
Jaufré Rudel, *L'Amour de Loin* (Féstival Opéra de Québec)
Lt. Audebert, *Silent Night* (Opéra de Montréal)
Billy Budd, *Billy Budd* (Teatro Carlo Felice)
Pelléas, *Pelléas et Melisande* (Semperoper Dresden)

UPCOMING
Pelléas, *Pelléas et Melisande* (Staatsoper Hamburg)
Don Giovanni, *Don Giovanni* (Teatro Carlo Felice)

CHRISTOPHER ALDEN

Director (New York City, NY, U.S.A)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT
The Flying Dutchman, 2009

RECENT
Partenope (San Francisco Opera)
Norma (Opéra National de Bordeaux)
Il Turco in Italia (Teatro Regio di Torino)
The Rake's Progress (Staatstheater Braunschweig)

UPCOMING
Norma (English National Opera)
Sweeney Todd (Glimmerglass Festival)
Tristan und Isolde (Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe)
The Flying Dutchman (Seattle Opera)

ARIN ARBUS

Director (Brooklyn, NY, U.S.A.)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT

RECENT
The Rape of Lucretia (Houston Grand Opera)
King Lear, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure* and *Othello* (Theatre for a New Audience)

UPCOMING
A Doll's House and *The Father* (Theatre for a New Audience)

CHRISTOPHER ASH

Projection Designer (New York City, NY, U.S.A.)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Carmina Burana (Chautauqua Institution)
Merrily We Row Along (Cutler Majestic Theatre)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Guthrie Theater, Wurtele Thrust Theater)
Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls (Yale Repertory Theater)

UPCOMING
Set Designer, *Bye Bye Birdie* (Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook, Illinois)

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DEREK BATE

Assistant Conductor (Toronto, ON)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT
Conductor, *Carmen*, 1979

RECENT
Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung (COC)
Die Walküre (COC)
Falstaff (COC)

UPCOMING
Siegfried (COC)
Carmen (COC)
Conductor, *The Student Prince* (Toronto Operetta Theatre)

CHARLES CASTRONOVO

Tenor (New York City, NY, U.S.A.)
Alfredo, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Faust, *Faust* (Teatro Regio di Torino)
Lensky, *Eugene Onegin* (Vienna State Opera)
Faust, *Damnation de Faust* (Berlin Philharmonic and Baden Baden)
Rodolfo, *La Bohème* (Metropolitan Opera)
Ruggero, *La Rondine* (Deutsche Oper Berlin)

UPCOMING
Edgardo, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden)
Ferrando, *Così fan tutte* (Opera Australia)
Faust, *Mefistofele* (Baden Baden)

TIM CLAYDON

Choreographer (Hertfordshire, UK)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Così fan tutte (Garsington Opera)
La Vida Breve/Gianni Schicchi (Opera North)
Parsifal (Lyric Opera of Chicago)
Peter Grimes (Aldeburgh Beach)

UPCOMING
Andrea Chénier (Opera North)
L'elisir d'amore (Opera North/Houston Grand Opera)

NEIL CRAIGHEAD

Bass-baritone (Calgary, AB)
Dr. Grenvil, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Trojan Soldier 2, *Idomeneo*, 2010

RECENT
Leporello, *#UncleJohn* (Against the Grain Theatre)
Sarastro, *The Magic Flute* (Edmonton Opera)
Nottingham's Servant, *Roberto Devereux* (COC)

JOHANNES DEBUS

COC Music Director (Berlin, Germany/ Toronto, ON)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT
War and Peace, 2008

RECENT
Aspen Chamber Symphony (Aspen Music Festival)
Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung (COC)
Die Walküre (COC)
The Tales of Hoffmann (Bregenz Festival)
Prom 74 (BBC Proms)

UPCOMING
The Marriage of Figaro (COC)
Siegfried (COC)
The Art of Music (San Diego Symphony)
A Little Night Music (National Arts Centre)

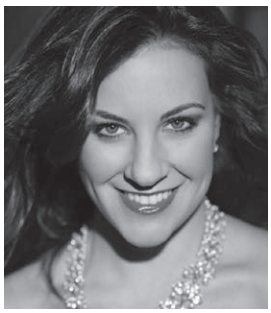
MARCUS DOSHI

Lighting Designer (Chicago, IL, U.S.A.)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Svadba (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence)
Les mamelles de Tirésias (La Monnaie/ Aldeburgh Festival/Festival d'Aix-en-Provence)
El Niño (Spoleto Festival)
Elektra (Seattle Opera)
Professor of Stage Design, Northwestern University

UPCOMING
Les mamelles de Tirésias (Dutch National Opera)
The Cocoanuts (Guthrie Theatre)
Der Kaiser von Atlantis (Juilliard School)



JOYCE EL-KHOURY

Soprano (Ottawa, ON)
Violetta, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Musetta/Mimì, *La Bohème*, 2013

RECENT
Violetta, *La Traviata* (Savonlinna Festival)
Musetta, *La Bohème* (Dutch National Opera)
Emmeline, *Emmeline*, (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis)

UPCOMING
Rossini's *Stabat Mater* (Orchestre de Paris)
Musetta, *La Bohème* (Bayerische Staatsoper)
Maria Stuarda, *Maria Stuarda*, (Seattle Opera)
Tatyana Bakst, *Great Scott* (San Diego Opera)

JEAN-PHILIPPE FORTIER-LAZURE

Tenor (Kitchener-Waterloo, ON)
Giuseppe, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Count Almaviva, *The Barber of Seville* (Ensemble Studio Performance), 2015

RECENT
Pelléas, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Nova Scotia Opera Company)
Chevalier de la Force, *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Atelier d'Opéra, University of Montreal)
Beppe, *Pagliacci* (Opera Lyra Ottawa)

UPCOMING
Don Curzio, *The Marriage of Figaro* (COC)
Don Basilio, *The Marriage of Figaro* (COC Ensemble Studio performance)
Le Remendado, *Carmen* (COC)

AVIVA FORTUNATA

Soprano (Calgary, AB)
Annina, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Fiordiligi, *Così fan tutte* (Ensemble Studio performance), 2014

RECENT
Berta, *The Barber of Seville* (COC)
Helmwige, *Die Walküre* (COC)
Song Prize Finalist, 2015 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World

UPCOMING
The Countess, *The Marriage of Figaro* (COC, Ensemble Studio performance)

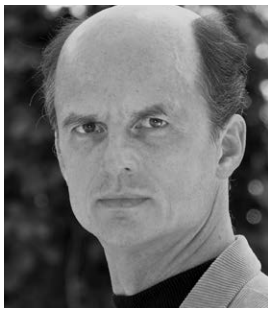
ROBERT GLEADOW

Bass-baritone (Mississauga, ON)
Dr. Grenvil, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Colline, *La Bohème*, 2004

RECENT
Don Basilio, *The Barber of Seville* (COC)
Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Drottningholms Slottsteater Theatre, Sweden)
Publio, *La clemenza di Tito* (Théâtre des Champs-Elysées)

UPCOMING
Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Royal Opera of Versailles)
Lindorf/Coppélius/Dr. Miracle/Dappertutto, *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Oper Köln)



THOMAS GOERZ

Bass-baritone (Kitchener, ON)
Baron Douphol, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Nikitich/Chernikovsky, *Boris Godunov*, 2002

RECENT
Father Palmer, *Silent Night* (Opéra de Montréal)
Zuniga, *Carmen* (Vancouver Opera)
Don Basilio, *The Barber of Seville* (Edmonton Opera)
Mikado, *The Mikado* (Calgary Opera)

UPCOMING
Prophet/King, *Dark Sisters* (Vancouver Opera)

MARILYN GRONSDAL

Assistant Director (Toronto, ON)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT
Director, *La Bohème*, 2009

RECENT
Madama Butterfly (Saskatoon Opera)
Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung (COC)
Associate Director, *Die Walküre* (COC)
Falstaff (COC)

UPCOMING
Associate Director, *Siegfried* (COC)
Maometto II (COC)

MARCO GUIDARINI

Conductor (Genoa, Italy)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT
Simon Boccanegra, 2009

RECENT
Mefistofele (Prague State Opera)
Il viaggio a Reims (Cité de la Musique with the Paris Conservatoire)
Le convenienze e inconvenienze teatrali (Teatro alla Scala)
Turandot (Bolshoi Theatre)

UPCOMING
Roméo et Juliette (Prague State Opera)
The International Vincenzo Bellini Bel Canto Competition Prize-winner's Concert (Opéra de Marseille)
National Chinese Youth Orchestra, State University (Beijing, China)

ANDREW HAJI

Tenor (London, ON)
Alfredo, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Ferrando, *Così fan tutte* (Ensemble Studio performance), 2014

RECENT
Count Almaviva, *The Barber of Seville* (COC, Ensemble Studio performance)
Rodriguez, *Don Quichotte* (COC)
Rodolfo, *La Bohème* (Centre for Opera Studies in Italy)

UPCOMING
Condulmiero, *Maometto II* (COC)
Jacquino, *Fidelio* (Opera Lyra Ottawa)

RICCARDO HERNANDEZ

Set Designer (Hamden, CT, U.S.A.)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT

RECENT
A Coffin in Egypt (Houston Grand Opera)
Charlie Parker's Yard Bird (Opera Philadelphia)
Die Entführung aus dem Serail (Opéra de Nice)
Il Postino (Los Angeles Opera)

UPCOMING
Don Giovanni (Santa Fe Opera)
La Bohème (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis)

SANDRA HORST

Chorus Master (Toronto, ON)
La Traviata and *Pyramus and Thisbe* (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT
Norma, 1998

RECENT
The Barber of Seville (COC)
Semele (COC/Brooklyn Academy of Music)
Conductor, *Postcard from Morocco* (UofT Opera)

UPCOMING
The Marriage of Figaro (COC)
Carmen (COC)
Maometto II (COC)

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JOEL IVANY

Assistant Director (Toronto, ON)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT
La Bohème, 2009

RECENT
Program Director, Open Space: Opera in the 21st Century (The Banff Centre)
Director, *#UncleJohn* (Ottawa International Chamber Festival)
Director, *Death & Desire* (Against the Grain Theatre)
Director, *Marilyn Forever* (Adelaide Festival)

UPCOMING
Director, *Carmen* (COC)
Director, Mozart's *Requiem* (Toronto Symphony Orchestra)

QUINN KELSEY

Baritone (Honolulu, HI, U.S.A.)
Giorgio Germont, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Rigoletto, *Rigoletto*, 2011

RECENT
Germont, *La Traviata* (Metropolitan Opera/Opernhaus Zürich)
Conte di Luna, *Il Trovatore* (Lyric Opera of Chicago)
Rigoletto, *Rigoletto* (Santa Fe Opera)

UPCOMING
Marcello, *La Bohème* (Metropolitan Opera)
Enrico, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera Frankfurt)
Germont, *La Traviata* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden)
Rigoletto, *Rigoletto* (Opéra National de Paris/Opernhaus Zürich)

JENIFER KOWAL

Stage Manager (Thornhill, ON)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT
Assistant Stage Manager, *Falstaff*, 1992

RECENT
Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung (COC)
Don Giovanni (COC)
Falstaff (COC)

UPCOMING
The Marriage of Figaro (COC)
Maometto II (COC)

IAIN MACNEIL

Bass-baritone (Brockville, ON)
Marquis d'Obigny, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Commissioner, *Madama Butterfly*, 2014

RECENT
Dr. Bartolo, *The Barber of Seville* (COC Ensemble Studio performance)
Fiorello, *The Barber of Seville* (COC)
Guglielmo, *Così fan tutte* (Centre for Opera Studies in Italy)

UPCOMING
Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro* (COC Ensemble Studio performance)
Le Dancaïre, *Carmen* (COC)

STEPHANIE MARRS

Stage Manager (Toronto, ON)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT
Madama Butterfly, 2003

RECENT
Madama Butterfly (COC)
Hercules (COC)
Dialogues des Carmélites (COC)

UPCOMING
Centre Stage (COC)

OWEN MCCAUSLAND

Tenor (Saint John, NB)
Narrator, *Pyramus and Thisbe*
Testo, *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*

COC DEBUT
Messenger, *Il Trovatore*, 2012

RECENT
Arturo, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Pacific Opera Victoria)
Juan, *Don Quichotte* (COC)
Lord Cecil, *Roberto Devereux* (COC)
Tito, *La clemenza di Tito* (COC)

UPCOMING
Soloist, *AtG's Messiah* (Against the Grain Theatre)

AUSTIN MCCORMICK

Choreographer (New York City, NY, U.S.A.)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Founder, Company XIV
Eliogabalo and *Orientale* (Gotham Chamber Opera)
Much Ado About Nothing (Theatre for A New Audience)

UPCOMING
Rusalka (Metropolitan Opera)
Cinderella, *Nutcracker Rouge* and *Snow White* (Company XIV)

JAX MESSENGER

Lighting Designer (New York, NY, U.S.A.)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Princess Butterfly (The Wanda Culture Industry Group, Xishuangbanna Yunnan, China)
The Wreckers (Bard SummerScape)
Orlando (WhiteBox Lab>SoundLounge)

UPCOMING
In The Penal Colony (Boston Lyric Opera)

showone PRODUCTIONS

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Baritone · ***Ivari Ilya****, piano*

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Soprano · ***Anthony Manoli****, piano*

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BARBARA MONK FELDMAN

Composer (Eastern Townships, QC)
Pyramus and Thisbe

COC DEBUT

RECENT COMPOSITIONS
Poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins, choral, 2014
Soft Horizons, piano, 2012
The Pale Blue Northern Sky, chamber, 2007
Landscape Near La Pocatière, Québec, chamber, 2007

EDUCATION
Ph.D., University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
M.Mus., McGill University

CAIT O'CONNOR

Costume and Puppetry Designer (New York City, NY, U.S.A.)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Inspiré (Cirque du Soleil)
The Seagull (Anton's Week LLC)
A Lie of the Mind (Trinity Repertory Company)
Titus Andronicus (Public Theater)

UPCOMING
The Love of the Nightingale (Trinity Repertory Company)

LAUREN SEGAL

Mezzo-soprano (Toronto, ON)
Flora, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Third Lady, *The Magic Flute*, 2006

RECENT
Katisha, *The Mikado* (Calgary Opera)
Meg Page, *Falstaff* (COC)
M'Dea, *M'Dea Undone* (Tapestry New Opera/Scottish Opera)
Suzuki, *Madama Butterfly* (Opera Tampa)
Maddalena, *Rigoletto* (Opera Tampa)

UPCOMING
Emilia, *Otello* (Opéra de Montréal)
Hermia, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Pacific Opera Victoria)
Handel's *Messiah* (San Francisco Symphony)

EKATERINA SIURINA

Soprano (Ekaterinburg, Russia)
Violetta, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Gilda, *Rigoletto* (Wiener Staatsoper and Bayerische Staatsoper)
Nannetta, *Falstaff* (Bayerische Staatsoper)
Zerlina, *Don Giovanni* (Metropolitan Opera)

UPCOMING
Leila, *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Opera Australia)
Giulietta, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (Gran Teatre del Liceu)

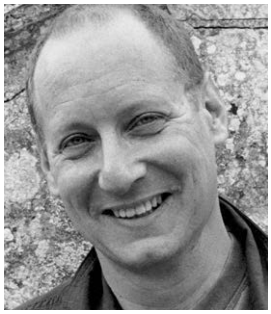
JORDAN DE SOUZA

Assistant Conductor (Montréal, QC)
La Traviata

COC DEBUT
Dialogues des Carmélites, 2013

RECENT
Conductor, Verdi *Requiem* (Ottawa Symphony)
Conductor, Mass in B Minor (Ensemble Caprice)
Conductor, *M'dea Undone* (Tapestry New Opera)
Assistant Conductor (Houston Grand Opera/Bregenzer Festspiele)

UPCOMING
Assistant Conductor and Conductor, *The Marriage of Figaro* (COC)



PAUL STEINBERG

Set Designer (New York City, NY, U.S.A.)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT
Falstaff, 2014

RECENT
Falstaff (Metropolitan Opera/Dutch National Opera/Teatro alla Scala/Royal Opera House, Covent Garden [ROH])
Khovanshchina (Vlaamse Opera)
Der Rosenkavalier (Glyndebourne Festival)
The Master Singers of Nuremberg (English National Opera)

UPCOMING
Tristan und Isolde, (Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe)
Semiramide (Bayersiche Staatsoper, co-production with ROH)

CHARLES SY

Tenor (Toronto, ON)
Gastone, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT

RECENT
Adolfo, *La Rondine* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis)
Mr. Owen, *Postcard from Morocco* (UofT Opera)
Tamino, *Die Zauberflöte* (Hawaii Performing Arts Festival)

UPCOMING
Rooster, *The Bremen Town Musicians* (Glencore Ensemble Studio School Tour at the COC)

KRISZTINA SZABÓ

Mezzo-soprano (Toronto, ON)
Thisbe, *Pyramus and Thisbe*
Clorinda, *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*
Arianna, *Lamento d'Arianna*

COC DEBUT
Clothilde, *Norma*, 1998

RECENT
The Woman, *Erwartung* (COC)
The Woman, *Death & Desire* (Against the Grain Theatre)
Judith, *Bluebeard's Castle* (Colorado Music Festival)
Cherubino, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Calgary Opera)

UPCOMING
Judas Maccabeus (Music of the Baroque)
Handel's *Messiah* (Calgary Philharmonic and Symphony Nova Scotia)

JAN VACULIK
Baritone (Toronto, ON)
Messenger, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Polish Father, *Death in Venice*, 2011

RECENT
Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Highlands Opera Studio)
Fiorello, *The Barber of Seville* (COC Ensemble Studio performance)
Officer, *The Barber of Seville* (COC)
Sharpless, *Madama Butterfly* (State Opera Slovakia)

UPCOMING
Robber and others, *The Bremen Town Musicians* (Glencore Ensemble Studio School Tour at the COC)

TERESE WADDEN
Costume Designer (Brooklyn, NY, U.S.A.)
Pyramus and Thisbe (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*)

COC DEBUT
A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi, 2012

RECENT
Orlando (WhiteBox Art Center)
La clemenza di Tito (COC)
Lizzie Borden (Boston Lyric Opera and Tanglewood Festival)
Kat'a Kabanova (Spoleto Festival)
Dialogues des Carmélites (Opera Philadelphia)

UPCOMING
The Penal Colony (Boston Lyric Opera)
Ariodante (Performa)

JAMES WESTMAN
Baritone (Stratford, ON)
Baron Douphol/Germont, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Sharpless, *Madama Butterfly*, 2003

RECENT
Scarpia, *Tosca* (Opéra de Québec)
Handel's *Messiah* (New York Philharmonic)
Salieri, *Mozart and Salieri* (Vancouver Symphony)

UPCOMING
Enrico, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Utah Opera)
Conte di Luna, *Il Trovatore* (English National Opera)

GENE WU
Baritone (Calgary, AB)
Flora's Servant, *La Traviata*

COC DEBUT
Yakuside, *Madama Butterfly*, 2014

RECENT
Mandarin, *Turandot* (Manitoba Opera)
Prince Yamadori, *Madama Butterfly* (Opera Lyra)
Chorus, *Falstaff* and *Don Giovanni* (COC)

NEW FREE SERIES!

Opera Insights

BIG CONVERSATIONS AND INTERACTIVE EVENTS TO TAKE YOU INSIDE THE COC'S 2015/2016 SEASON

This Fall

OPERATIC BEGINNINGS: MONTEVERDI STYLE
Wednesday, October 14, 2015, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Take a trip back to 17th-century Italy with COC Orchestra violinists Paul Zevenhuizen and Liz Johnston, joined by musicologist and COC speaker, Stephan Bonfield.

SING ALONG WITH *LA TRAVIATA*
Monday, October 26, 2015, 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
A unique opportunity to sing some of opera's most popular choruses under the expert baton of the COC's celebrated Chorus Master, Sandra Horst. All levels of singers are welcome!

***LA TRAVIATA* AND THE HISTORY OF THE BALL GOWN**
Monday, November 2, 2015, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Featuring period costumes from Ryerson University's Fashion Research Centre, guests speakers include Dr. Alison Matthews; David and Ingrid Mida from Ryerson University's School of Fashion; COC Costume Supervisor, Sandra Corazza; and, *Globe and Mail* Social Columnist, Nolan Bryant.

These three events take place at the Education Centre, **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, 145 Queen St. W.**

Due to overwhelming demand, most of **our fall events are already at capacity**. Last minute spots may become available, so please sign up for the waitlist at **coc.ca/OperaInsights** or call **416-363-8231**.

FREE TICKETS REQUIRED FOR ALL EVENTS
Free tickets become available on **Monday, December 14, 2015** for winter events and **Monday, March 7, 2015** for spring events. Sign up at **coc.ca/eOpera** to receive reminders right in your inbox.

REGISTRATION POLICY As these events are free, it is our policy to overbook. In case of a full program, your reservation may not guarantee admission. Unclaimed reservations will be released to standby patrons 10 minutes prior to the start of the program. We recommend that you arrive early.

LA TRAVIATA

BY GIUSEPPE VERDI
Opera in Three Acts ◆ Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, after a play adapted from Alexandre Dumas *fils*' novel *La Dame aux camélias*
First performance: Teatro La Fenice, Venice, March 6, 1853

NEW COC PRODUCTION
Co-production with Lyric Opera of Chicago and Houston Grand Opera
Last performed by the COC in 2007

October 8, 13, 16, 17, 21, 24, 29, 30, November 1, 4, 6, 2015
Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™

THE CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

Violetta Valéry	Ekaterina Siurina[D] Joyce El-Khoury (Oct. 16, 30, Nov. 6)
Flora Bervoix	Lauren Segal^
Marquis d'Obigny	Iain MacNeil[†**]
Baron Douphol	James Westman^ Thomas Goerz (Oct. 16, 30, Nov. 6)
Gastone, Viscount de Letorières	Charles Sy[†D*****]
Alfredo Germont	Charles Castronovo[D] Andrew Haji[†*] (Oct. 16, 30, Nov. 6)
Annina	Aviva Fortunata[†****]
Dr. Grenvil	Robert Gleadow^ Neil Craighead^ (Oct. 16, 30, Nov. 4, 6)
Giuseppe	Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure[†***]
Giorgio Germont	Quinn Kelsey James Westman^ (Oct. 16, 30, Nov. 6)
A Messenger	Jan Vaculik
Flora's Servant	Gene Wu

Conductor	Marco Guidarini
Director	Arin Arbus[D]
Set Designer	Riccardo Hernandez[D]
Costume and Puppetry Designer	Cait O'Connor[D]
Lighting Designer	Marcus Doshi[D]
Projection Designer	Christopher Ash[D]
Choreographer	Austin McCormick[D]
Chorus Master	Sandra Horst^******
Stage Manager	Stephanie Marrs
SURTITLES™ Producer	Gunta Dreifelds

Performance time is approximately two hours and 50 minutes, including two intermissions

Generously underwritten in part by

DAVID ROFFEY AND KAREN WALSH

BMO Financial Group

*Andrew Haji's performance is generously sponsored by Brian Wilks, Roy and Marjorie Linden

**Iain MacNeil's performance is generously sponsored by Roger D. Moore

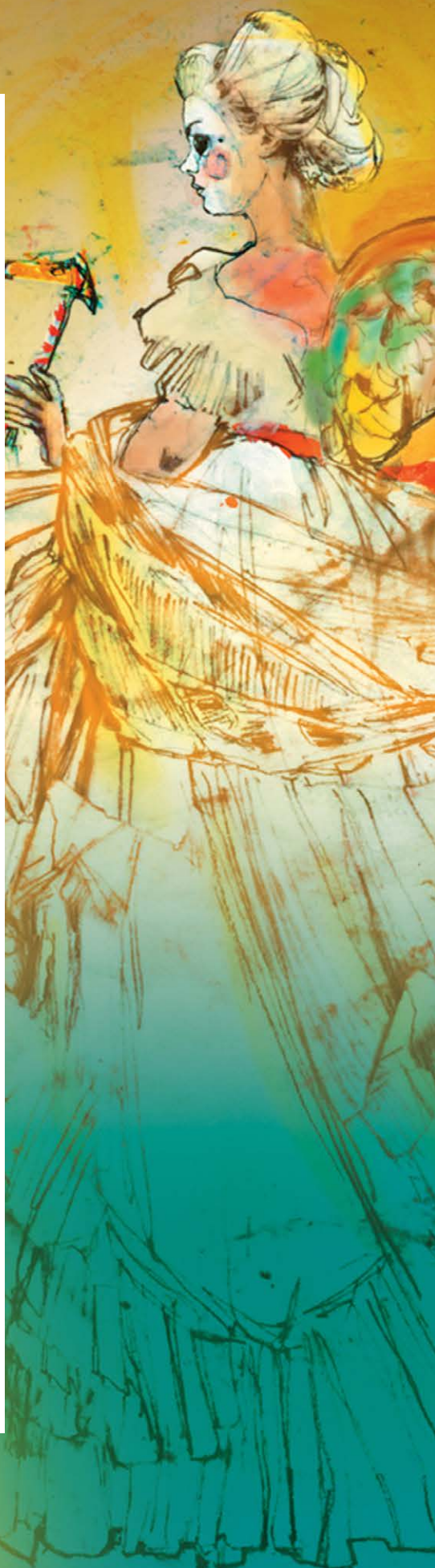
***Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure's performance is generously sponsored by Margaret Harriett Cameron and the late Gary Smith

****Aviva Fortunata's performance is generously sponsored by COVC Jean A. Chalmers Award

*****Charles Sy's performance is generously sponsored by an anonymous donor

******Sandra Horst and the COC Chorus are generously underwritten by Tim and Frances Price

[D] COC Debut [†] Current member of the COC Ensemble Studio [^] Graduate of COC Ensemble Studio
Program information is correct at time of printing. All casting is subject to change.



Chorus

SOPRANOS
Lindsay Barrett
Andrea Cerswell
Margaret Evans
Ilona Karan
Alexandra Lennox-Pomeroy
Ingrid Martin
Eve Rachel McLeod
Jennifer Robinson
Teresa van der Hoeven
Ilana Zarankin

MEZZO-SOPRANOS
Susan Black
Sandra Boyes
Wendy Hatala Foley
Erica Iris Huang
Lilian Kilianski
Kathryn Knapp
Anne McWatt
Karen Olinyk
Vilma Indra Vitols
Paula Wickberg

TENORS
Vanya Abrahams
Stephen Bell
Taras Chmil
Sam Chung
Sean Clark
Stephen Erickson
John Kriter
James Leatch
Stephen McClare
Eric Olsen

BARITONES/BASSES
Grant Allert
Kenneth Baker
James Baldwin
Sung Chung
Michael Downie
Jason Nedecky
Michael Sproule
Jan Vaculik
Gene Wu
Michael York

Orchestra

VIOLIN I
Marie Bérard, *Concertmaster*
The Concertmaster's chair has been endowed in perpetuity by Joey and Toby Tanenbaum
Aaron Schwebel, *Associate Concertmaster*
Jamie Kruspe, *Assistant Concertmaster*
Anne Armstrong
James Aylesworth
Sandra Baron (leave of absence)
Bethany Bergman
Hiroko Kagawa*
Nancy Kershaw
Dominique Laplante
Yakov Lerner
Jayne Maddison
Neria Mayer

VIOLIN II
Paul Zevenhuizen, *Principal*
Csaba Koczó, *Assistant Principal* (leave of absence)
Aya Miyagawa, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Jennie Baccante*
Elizabeth Johnston
Boris Kupesic*
Renée London*
Laurel Mascarenhas*
Louise Tardif
Marianne Urke
Joanna Zabrowarna

VIOLA
Keith Hamm, *Principal*
Joshua Greenlaw, *Assistant Principal* (leave of absence)
Sheila Jaffé, *Acting Assistant Principal*
Rory McLeod*
Nicholaos Papadakis*
Angela Rudden*
Laurence Schaufele*
Beverley Spotton
Yosef Tamir

CELLO
Bryan Epperson, *Principal*
Alastair Eng, *Associate Principal*
Paul Widner, *Assistant Principal*
Maurizio Baccante
Olga Laktionova
Elaine Thompson

BASS
Alan Molitz, *Principal*
Robert Speer, *Assistant Principal*
Tom Hazlitt
Paul Langley
Robert Wolanski*

FLUTE
Douglas Stewart, *Principal*
Shelley Brown

PICCOLO
Shelley Brown

OBOE
Mark Rogers, *Principal*
Lesley Young

CLARINET
James Shields, *Principal* (leave of absence)
Dominic Desautels, *Acting Principal**
Colleen Cook

BASSOON
Eric Hall, *Principal*
Elizabeth Gowen

HORN
Scott Wevers, *Acting Principal**
Janet Anderson
Bardhyl Gjevori
Gary Pattison

TRUMPET
Robert Grim, *Principal*
Robert Weymouth

TROMBONE
Charles Benaroya, *Principal*
Ian Cowie

BASS TROMBONE
Herbert Poole

CIMBASSO
Scott Irvine, Principal

TIMPANI
Michael Perry, *Principal*

PERCUSSION
Trevor Tureski, *Principal*
Ryan Scott*

Banda

FLUTE PICCOLO
Maria Pelletier*

PICCOLO
Tristan Durie*

CLARINET
James Ormston*
Michele Verheul*

HORN
Roslyn Black*
Michele Gagnon*
Micajah Sturgess*

TRUMPET
Andrew Dubelsten*

TROMBONE
David Pell*

PERCUSSION
Trevor Tureski, Principal

HARP
Sarah Davidson, Principal

LIBRARIAN
Wayne Vogan

ASSISTANT MUSIC LIBRARIAN
Ondrej Golias

STAGE LIBRARIAN
Paul Langley

PERSONNEL MANAGER
Ian Cowie

* extra musician

Director's Notes

One must remember *La Traviata* scandalized the censors when it was written. Why? Because Verdi chose to write about the hypocrisies of the society in which he was living. As much as the opera is a deeply drawn psychological portrait of a woman struggling to love and survive, it's a social critique. The story depicts a woman destroyed by a brutal and petty world. The love which Violetta and Alfredo create together is a rebellion against that world.

The chorus embodies the "teeming desert of Paris" from which Violetta attempts to escape. It's a stratified and monied sphere, filled with courtesans who are briefly kept by upperclass and aristocratic patrons until they are discarded, often to destitution.

In *The Lady of the Camellias*, upon which the opera is based, Dumas *fils* writes: "[Courtesans of Paris] are suns which set as they rose, unobserved. Their death, when they die young, is heard of by all their lovers at the same moment, for in Paris almost all the lovers of a well-known woman are friends. A few recollections are exchanged, and everybody's life goes on as if the incident had never occurred, without so much as a tear... one has friends only when one is perfectly well."

Violetta's life is a solitary and empty one, despite the crowds, the pleasures and the parties. She has no friends. No family. This kind of life has made her sick—physically and psychically.

Giorgio Germont reveals the bourgeois principles from which Alfredo rebels. Germont has conventional, rigid ideas about right and wrong. He values appearances and reputation more than love or happiness. This is a world which Verdi knew well.

Years after his wife and children had died, Verdi endured admonishments for living outside of marriage with the renowned soprano Giuseppina Strepponi. In an extraordinary letter to his former father-in-law, Verdi wrote what Violetta does *not* say to Germont: "I am not accustomed to interfere in other people's business, because I demand that no one interfere in mine... In my house there lives a free, independent lady who loves seclusion as I do... Neither she nor I owe any account of our action to anyone. Who knows whether she is my wife or not? And who knows in this special case what our thoughts and reasons are for not making it public? Who knows whether this is good or bad? Why might it not be a good thing? And even if it were bad, who has the right to hurl the ban against us?"

We have set this production in the 19th century, as Verdi intended, because the dramaturgy rests so deeply upon 19th-century bourgeois concepts of morality. And because the life and trade of a Parisian courtesan were so specific. Violetta's shame and her precarious financial situation are rooted in the values of her time and sit at the crux of the tragedy.

But the period is just the surface. The immediacy of the music, the characters, their situations and passions remain vital and relevant. How different is Violetta's world from our own?

Arin Arbus

Synopsis

ACT I

While entertaining members of the *demi-monde* of French society in her Parisian home, the beautiful but frail courtesan Violetta Valéry is introduced to Alfredo Germont, a young man from Provence. Alfredo tells her that he has adored her since he first set eyes on her, and proclaims that no one could ever love her as much as he now does. Violetta gently rebuffs him but invites him to call on her the next day. Later, when alone, she ponders the possibility of finding true love, then laughs off the idea, declaring that her life will remain a whirl of pleasure.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Scene i

Violetta has renounced her life as a Parisian courtesan and is now living happily in the country with Alfredo. Alfredo is surprised to learn that Violetta has been secretly selling off her possessions in Paris to pay for their living expenses, and, disturbed by this, he departs for Paris to raise enough money to buy back Violetta's belongings. After he has left, Alfredo's father, Giorgio Germont, pays a visit to Violetta. He tells her that he has a daughter who is currently engaged to a young man from a respectable family. He explains that Alfredo's affair with a woman of Violetta's reputation is a threat to his daughter's marriage and begs Violetta to leave Alfredo forever. At his insistence Violetta agrees to break with Alfredo and writes a letter to him. Alfredo returns unexpectedly and Violetta quickly takes her leave, promising to return later.

A messenger then delivers the letter to Alfredo, in which she tells him that she has left him forever to return to her former life in Paris. Germont returns, asking Alfredo to return to their family home but Alfredo, hurt and angered by Violetta's rejection, sets off to find her in Paris.

Scene ii

A party is in progress at the home of Violetta's friend, Flora. Alfredo enters and proceeds to gamble. Violetta has returned to Baron Douphol, her rich protector. Fearing their confrontation could lead to a duel, Violetta begs Alfredo to leave. He is overcome with rage and, in front of all the guests, he insults Violetta who faints. Germont, in search of his son, arrives to witness the whole scene.

INTERMISSION

ACT III

Violetta lies dying of consumption. She comforts herself by re-reading a letter from Germont, in which he explains that he has told his son the true reason for Violetta's sudden break with him. Violetta's maid Annina informs her that Alfredo has arrived and he rushes in, begging her to leave Paris with him forever. Violetta eagerly agrees but collapses. The doctor is summoned and he arrives with Alfredo's deeply remorseful father. After saying her final farewell to Alfredo, Violetta dies in his arms.

MUSIC STAFF
Matteo Pais (Head Coach)
Hyejin Kwon (Ensemble Studio Intern Coach)
Jennifer Szeto (Ensemble Studio Intern Coach)

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR
Jordan de Souza

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Joel Ivany

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS
Lesley Abarquez
Kristin McCollum

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNERS
Davida Tkach
Kaileigh Krysztofiak

ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER
Laura Careless

FIGHT DIRECTOR
James Binkley

DANCERS
Paul Charbonneau
Emilio Colalillo
Kiri Figueiredo
Ashley St. John

UNDERSTUDIES

Flora Bervoix	Lindsay Barrett
The Marquis d'Obigny	Michael York
Baron Douphol	Thomas Goerz
Gastone/Giuseppe	Aaron Sheppard

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We're here to help.

BMO Financial Group is proud to sponsor the **Canadian Opera Company** and this season's production of Verdi's **La Traviata.**

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

DAVID ROFFEY AND KAREN WALSH

BY NIKITA GOURSKI

"We travel a fair amount to see opera," Karen Walsh says, listing destinations both familiar—London, Berlin, Munich—but also off the beaten path, like Buenos Aires and Copenhagen.

These trips offer a global perspective on just how good the COC has become in recent years. "It stands up very well to the best in the world," David Roffey says of the COC's productions. "No question."

Indeed, in the two decades that Karen and her husband David have been generous supporters of the COC, the company has transformed into a powerhouse opera producer and staked out a place alongside top tier organizations like the Metropolitan Opera in New York, La Scala in Milan, and the Royal Opera House in London, in terms of artistic quality and production values.

A watershed moment was the 2006 completion of the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. David played an active role in that accomplishment as a member of the Capital Campaign Cabinet, while Karen was serving on the company's Board of Directors. Both have fond memories of working alongside Richard Bradshaw, the man who spearheaded the effort to build a world-class opera house in Toronto and usher in a new era of artistic excellence for the COC.

"Fabulous memories," Karen says.

Since then they have been delighted to witness and participate in the company's continuing evolution. "It has always been clear to David and me," Karen says, "that opera depends on the generosity of its supporters. We believe if you can help out, you absolutely must."

The magnitude of their support has been enormous, encompassing annual membership through the Golden Circle, support for major projects such as international touring, special event involvement, and much more.

"We have so much to be proud of with this company," Karen says. "The house is one of the best in the world; we are so lucky to have Alexander and Johannes; the quality of our productions is amazing and the range of programming is so diverse. We're really fortunate to have it all."

In 2013, David and Karen had the opportunity to travel with the General Director's Tour to the Lyric Opera of Chicago to see the COC's eventual co-production of *La Traviata*. They spoke at length to the show's director, Arin Arbus, a young New York-based artist widely acclaimed for her Off-Broadway renditions of Shakespeare, but relatively new to the opera stage.

"Arin was just so full of creative energy and intriguing perspective on the theatricality of opera," Karen says. "There are so many unfortunate clichés surrounding the art form but Arin is the opposite of that, she is the anti-cliché. She understands the piece, the history of the piece, and David and I just thought she had a fascinating approach."

The show fit the priorities they had as philanthropic ambassadors of the COC, so David and Karen decided to become partial underwriters.

"We're just happy to chip in," Karen says in a characteristic understatement of their continuing commitment to keep the COC a home to the best.

Nikita Gourski is Development Communications Officer at the COC.

For more information about supporting the COC, call 416-363-5801 or visit coc.ca/Support.

CANADA'S FUTURE OPERA STARS TAKE *Centre Stage*

BY JENNIFER PUGSLEY

Toronto tenor Charles Sy still remembers the first time he rehearsed with the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and heard the musicians play the introduction to "Una furtiva lagrima" from Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. He describes the feeling as akin to getting the keys to a brand new sports car: "You can feel the power and efficiency within your grasp and because of that you feel no need to have any inhibitions whatsoever."

The rehearsal was in anticipation of Charles singing in the 2014 Ensemble Studio competition at *Centre Stage*, the COC's premier annual celebration of Canadian talent. After that run-through, Charles let loose and won the competition (and Audience Choice Award) and earned a spot in the company's Ensemble Studio. He joined the COC's prestigious training program this fall hoping "to push myself to the limits, learn what those limits are and dare to push them even further."

In the Ensemble Studio this season, Charles is reunited with fellow 2014 competitor, third-prize winner tenor Aaron Sheppard, of St. John's, NL. Like Charles, Aaron's fondest memory of *Centre Stage* was his first step onto the stage of the Four Seasons Centre, but it's the expectation of what's to come that now has his full attention.

"I want to take advantage of everything thrown at me and use it to mould myself into a more complete singer and performer," shares Aaron.

The thrill of becoming a member of the Ensemble Studio isn't exclusive to singers; intern coach Hyejin Kwon also joins the program this season. Born in Seoul, South Korea, she began studying piano at age four, made her public debut at age seven and her orchestra debut at age 11. Hyejin moved to the United States at age 15 and then to Canada in the fall of 2012, where she recently completed the operatic répétiteur diploma program at the University of Toronto. This is in addition to her time at Lyric

Opera Baltimore as their répétiteur and the Repertory Theater of Washington as music director. The gifted pianist says she's still in shock to be joining "one of the most prestigious young artist programs in the world. Every day and each moment will be a precious learning experience for me."

For Charles and Aaron, though, their Ensemble Studio membership will feel especially rewarding when it comes time to attend *Centre Stage* on November 3, 2015. From his place in the audience, Aaron will be enjoying this "crazy awesome time"—as he puts it—with other patrons who will be getting a front-row seat to the emerging careers of some of Canada's most exciting young voices. Charles will have his own special vantage point, as he'll be co-hosting the event with Ensemble Studio soprano Karine Boucher, herself a former winner of the Ensemble Studio competition. Following the competition, dinner ticket-holders join the finalists, notable COC artists, as well as key supporters of the opera company at an elegant formal dinner on the Four Seasons Centre stage to enjoy a gastronomic feast created by Nota Bene's Executive Chef David Lee. As for the young artists following in his footsteps, it's to those operatic voices that Charles offers this sage advice: "Acknowledge that all you can do is give what you can in that particular moment and trust that it's enough. Regardless of what happens, I promise you will leave knowing so much more about yourself as a singer and as a person."

Jennifer Pugsley is Media Relations Manager at the Canadian Opera Company.

Centre Stage

Tickets are now available online at COCCentreStage.ca or by calling 416-363-8231.

$100 for the cocktail reception and competition

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MEET THE **2015/2016 ENSEMBLE STUDIO**

On September 22, the members of the 2015/2016 COC Ensemble Studio performed in the opening concert of the Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. They are, from left to right, Andrew Haji (tenor), Iain MacNeil (bass-baritone), Gordon Bintner (bass-baritone), Jennifer Szeto (pianist/intern coach) , Karine Boucher (soprano), Aaron Sheppard (tenor), Charles Sy (tenor), Aviva Fortunata (soprano), Jean-Philippe Fortier-Lazure (tenor), and Hyejin Kwon (pianist/intern coach).

CENTRE STAGE

ENSEMBLE STUDIO COMPETITION
TUESDAY, NOV 3, 2015

Cocktails 5:30p.m. Competition 6:30p.m.
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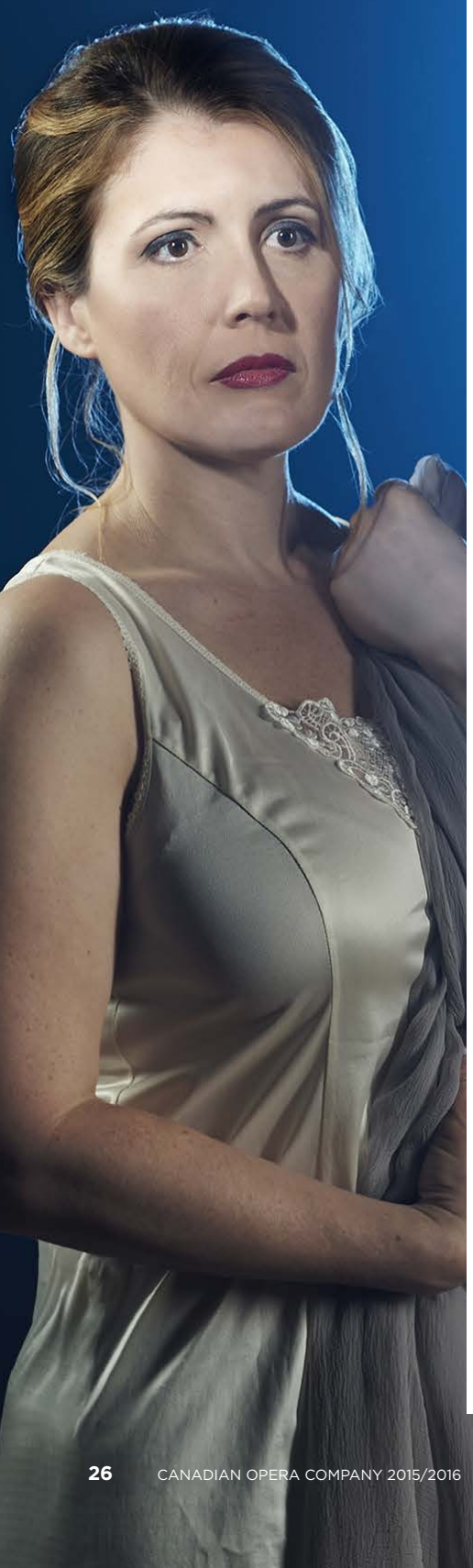
PYRAMUS AND THISBE



Lamento d'Arianna

BY CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

Solo for soprano and orchestra from Monteverdi's opera *L'Arianna*
Libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini ◆ First performance: Court of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, Mantua, May 28, 1608 ◆ Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™

Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda

BY CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

Operatic scena for three voices ◆ Libretto from *La Gerusalemme Liberata* by Torquato Tasso ◆ First performance: Palazza di Girolamo Mocenigo, Venice, 1624
Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™

Pyramus and Thisbe

BY BARBARA MONK FELDMAN

Canadian World Premiere

Opera in One Act
Libretto based on texts from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, William Faulkner's *The Long Summer*, St. John of the Cross's *Dark Night of the Soul*, and Rainer Maria Rilke's *Die Sonette an Orpheus.* One line of the libretto used with kind permission from De Gruyter GmbH, Berlin, from Karl Jaspers' *Die Geistige Situation der Zeit* (Walter De Gruyter, 1931, Berlin, p.162).

Sung in English, with sections in German and Latin, with English SURTITLES™

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(in order of vocal appearance)

Arianna/Clorinda/Thisbe	Krisztina Szabó^
Tancredi/Pyramus	Phillip Addis**
Testo/Narrator	Owen McCausland^***
Conductor	Johannes Debus*
Director	Christopher Alden
Set Designer	Paul Steinberg
Costume Designer	Terese Wadden
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Choreographer	Tim Claydon[D]
Chorus Master	Sandra Horst^****
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Performance time is approximately one hour and eight minutes, with no intermission

* Johannes Debus is generously underwritten by George and Kathy Dembroski

** Phillip Addis's performance is generously sponsored by Robert Sherrin

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[D] COC Debut ^ Graduate of COC Ensemble Studio
Program information is correct at time of printing. All casting is subject to change.

Director's Notes and Synopses on Three Musical Tales

During the past 400 or so years since it was first "invented" in Renaissance Italy, the operatic art form has always had an intriguingly schizophrenic nature. On one hand, it has always depended for its survival on the support of the rich and powerful patrons for whom a night at the opera is just as much a social as it is an esthetic experience. But on the other hand, with its magically alchemical mingling of words and music, opera has managed to penetrate into dark, mysterious and even painful realms of human experience, soothing its audience with sweet sounds while it tells its subversive stories.

The three musical tales which share the stage in tonight's "exotic and irrational entertainment" (as Dr. Samuel Johnson described it) span the entire history of opera, but share similar themes. Claudio Monteverdi's and Barbara Monk Feldman's pieces, all drawn from classical/mythological sources, address the spikily ambivalent nature of male/female relationships, the societal forces which conspire to throw roadblocks in the way of the deep human need to find spiritual and physical connection with another human being, and the eternal quest of us mortal beings to move beyond our ego fixations and find a richer and more organic relationship with existence.

Lamento d'Arianna, the only existing fragment from Monteverdi's second opera, became the composer's most celebrated and emulated piece in his day. Drawn from Ovid and other classical sources, the story tells of the Cretan princess, Ariadne, who falls in love with Theseus of Thebes, then helps him escape from the Labyrinth and kill her half-brother, the monstrous Minotaur. After this betrayal of her culture, Ariadne flees her homeland with Theseus, who rewards her by summarily dumping her on the first island they pass. He sails victoriously back to his kingdom as she laments her abandonment, alternating between extremes of sorrow, anger, fear, self-pity and desolation.

From a modern feminist perspective, Ariadne's predicament is the perfect metaphor of a woman's position in our patriarchal world. She trades her heritage, throne and power for a relationship with a powerful man. Worried that his people will not accept a foreign princess as their queen, he leaves her in the dust after she has given up everything for him, placing a higher value on his societal role than on hers. Ironically, audiences of Monteverdi's time might well have perceived Ariadne's story as teaching a moral lesson wherein a dangerously proud woman is justly punished for defying gender roles, betraying her father and choosing her own mate.

In *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, the "heroine" confronts the Christian patriarchy head on. Taken from an episode in Torquato Tasso's epic poem, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the piece thrillingly enacts the encounter of the Christian crusader knight Tancredi by the walls of Jerusalem with a mysterious Saracen opponent. They fight and the unknown infidel warrior is mortally wounded. Dying, the stranger asks to be baptized and is ultimately recognized by the traumatized Tancredi as his beloved Clorinda.

The knock-out-drag-out fight to the death on the marital battlefield in Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* has nothing on Monteverdi's terse depiction of male/female aggression. It is the definitive dramatization of the Battle of the Sexes, portraying men and women as two separate species, forever unknowable to each other, locked in an enmity as everlasting as that of Christians and Muslims endlessly fighting for possession of the holy city Jerusalem. Tasso's metaphorical joust functions on multiple levels, showing us in painstaking detail how each man kills the thing he loves. The Narrator tells us that "Three times the knight holds the woman/in his strong arms and as often/she escapes his tenacious embrace,/the embrace of a proud enemy and not of a lover." Yet there is something undeniably erotic about this sadomasochistic encounter between ambivalent lovers, suggesting that the flip side of the fearful mysteries and secrets which men and women (or people in general) hide from each other is actually an intense attraction to the mysteriously seductive Other. From a modern cultural perspective, it seems a shame that Tasso's gloriously fearless female Saracen Clorinda is not only put down by the male crusader Tancredi but, before dying, begs to be baptized so that she may convert to his faith (once again depicting the inevitable triumph of patriarchal Christianity). But who can deny the beauty of this denouement, which sings so exquisitely of forgiveness and transcendence?

Pyramus and Thisbe is all about transcendence, even going so far as to transcend a conventional narrative structure in order to work its subtle magic as a theatre piece built not on action but on contemplation, stillness, even silence. Barbara Monk Feldman was initially inspired to write the opera not so much by the Pyramus and Thisbe story (recounted by Ovid, then famously used by Shakespeare as the script mercilessly but mirthfully mangled by the mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), but by Nicolas Poussin's painting depicting a pivotal moment in the tragic story.

The composer's libretto is a fascinating collage of fragments of disparate texts which does not attempt to recount Ovid's tale in a literal manner. The story concerns a pair of lovers separated by a wall which their fathers, mortal enemies, have constructed. The lovers, having found a chink in the wall, use it to communicate with each other, eventually devising a secret plan to meet by night. Thisbe is the first to arrive at the agreed-upon location, but is frightened away when she sees a lioness approach. Escaping, she drops her veil, which the lioness rips apart, leaving it torn and smeared in the blood from a recent kill. After the lioness departs, Pyramus arrives, sees the torn and bloody veil, and assumes that Thisbe has been murdered. Grief-stricken, he stabs himself only moments before Thisbe returns to find her dying lover. She then uses his bloody dagger to end her own life. This tale (which Shakespeare also used as the basis for the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*) is a classic reminder that "the course of true love never did run smooth." With its warring fathers, veritable Berlin Wall and climactic *Liebestod,* Ovid's story suggests that the true union of two souls is impossible in this imperfect world, achievable only after death.

Ovid's story is used as a jumping-off point to address the wider issue of coming to terms with existence. The first section, using a Faulkner text about a man collapsing the moment after he has been fatally shot, shows us Pyramus in the moment of his suicide, struggling with his own death-wish. The second section is taken from the opening poem of *Dark Night of the Soul*, a religious text by the 16th-century Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross. It equates Thisbe's secret nocturnal journey to meet Pyramus with the journey of the soul to its blissful union with God, achieved through spiritual negation of worldly things. The rapturous atmosphere of this episode is tempered by Thisbe's awareness of worldly danger (the lioness). The pivotal moment in the opera occurs at the beginning of the third section, when Thisbe, in a text by the 20th-century German psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers, says to Pyramus, "Don't sacrifice yourself, be yourself!" In doing so, she urges him to transcend the endless mortal cycles of desire, aggression and ego fixation which are exemplified in the stories of tormented human interactions, like those of Ariadne and Theseus and Tancredi and Clorinda. When, climactically, Pyramus responds with stanzas from Rilke's ecstatic *Sonnets to Orpheus*, he takes up Thisbe's challenge and steps outside the box of traditionally dogmatic patriarchal assumptions to embrace a wider connection to existence, moving beyond his fear of the unknown, the unconscious, and finally of death itself.

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Performers	Emilio Colalillo Kiri Figueiredo

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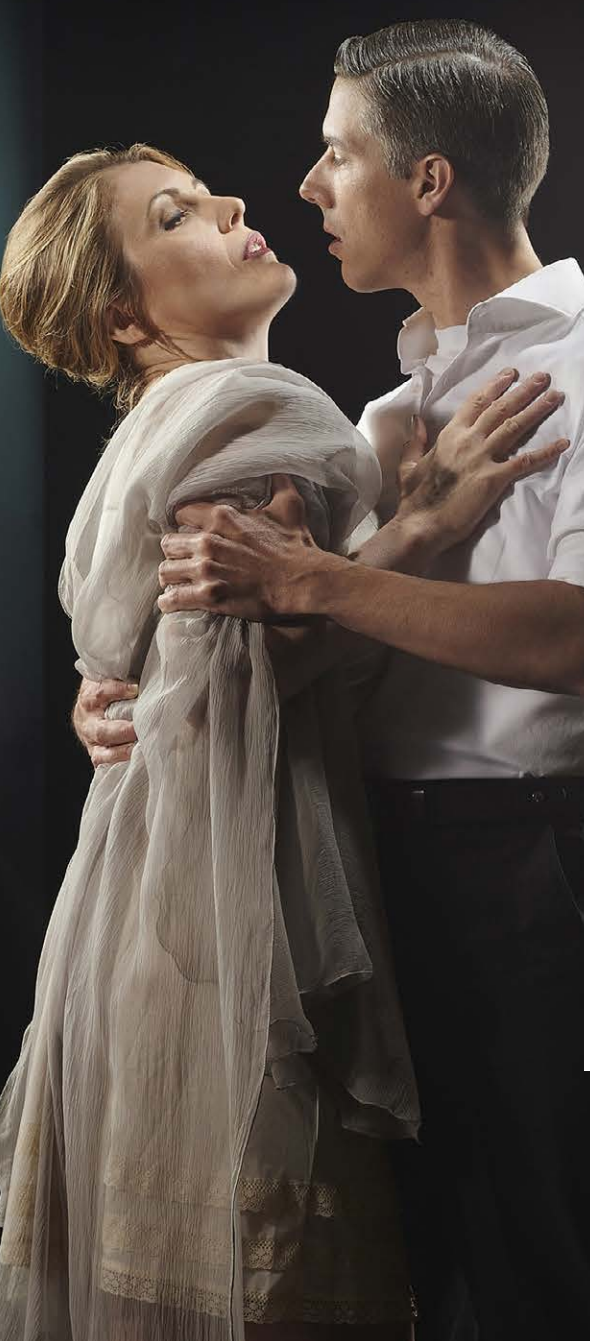

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Neria Mayer
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Aya Miyagawa, *Acting Assistant Principal*
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Ovid Reconfigured

PROGRAM NOTES ON BARBARA MONK FELDMAN'S *PYRAMUS AND THISBE*

BY AMY BEAL

Canadian composer Barbara Monk Feldman (b. 1953) considers her opera a "non-opera" in the sense that she feels it is closer to the genre of a tone poem: it is in one act (three sections performed without breaks), and about 50 minutes long. The opera focuses not on action, or on "the traditional arrow of time," but on a man and woman's interior emotional states as separated by a metaphoric wall of the "subtlety of the unconscious;" the presence of nature; and a stillness evocative of Samuel Beckett's most static work. She composed it over a period of two years, completing the work in 2010. The libretto consists of diverse excerpts from literature stretching over a long arc of time. There are four lines from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 20 or so lines from *The Long Summer* (1931) by William Faulkner, another 10 or so lines from the 16th-century mystic St. John of the Cross, two lines by the composer, one line from German philosopher Karl Jaspers, and two nearly complete poems from the *Sonnets to Orpheus* by Rainer Maria Rilke. The opera is further inspired by a Baroque painting titled *Stormy Landscape with Pyramus and Thisbe* (1651) by Nicolas Poussin, which the composer first encountered in Frankfurt in 1983. The painting continued to resonate with her, and in 1997 she published an article titled "Music and the Picture Plane: Poussin's 'Pyramus and Thisbe' and Morton Feldman's 'For Philip Guston.'" Clearly she has been thinking about these star-crossed lovers for a very long time.

The Roman poet Ovid included the story of Pyramus and Thisbe in his magnum opus *Metamorphoses*. It tells the now-familiar tale of a young man and young woman who fall in love, but whose parents forbid from marrying. Through a crack in the wall separating their houses, they communicate secretly, and plan to meet outside their city under a specific mulberry tree. When Thisbe arrives, she is confronted by a lioness with jaws bloodied from a kill. Thisbe flees, and loses her veil to the lioness. Pyramus arrives to find the bloody veil and the lioness's tracks. Believing that Thisbe has been killed, he takes his own life with his sword. Thisbe returns to find her would-be lover opening his eyes to her for the last time. Realizing that the bloody veil misled Pyramus into believing she had been killed, she takes her own life as well. In response to this tragedy, their families agree to bury the ashes of both in the same urn under the mulberry tree. The berries, formerly white, now turn dark red each year, symbolizing the blood of the united, tragic young lovers.

Ovid's story, however, provides only a referential starting point for Monk Feldman's opera. Though the characters of Pyramus and Thisbe might be well known to many opera goers, she treats them not so much as distinct personalities, but as abstract figures undergoing various subtle shifts in their unconscious. It should be pointed out that Monk Feldman gives careful consideration to the "character" of the lioness. The composer explains:

"The challenge for integrating the lioness into the opera setting was

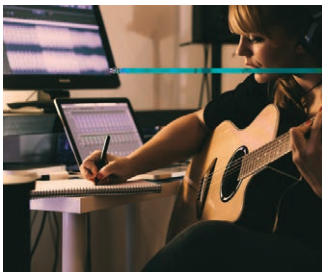
A keen student of visual art, Monk Feldman has various ideas about the visual aspects of the opera: "stylistically minimal, yet soft-edged," as she writes in the suggestions for staging.

how to include it in a non-narrative way. In Ovid, the lioness is part of a story: I was interested in something else. I wanted the lioness to point in the direction of aspects in nature that arouse both fear and consolation and, as such, have unpredictable workings on the unconscious."

The opera represents a departure from the age-old story of forbidden love—in its Ur-form embodied by Ovid's Pyramus and Thisbe, and also by Tristan and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet, and others. In this setting Thisbe's decision not to run from the lioness changes the fate of the two lovers: instead of a death, the lovers are left to face a vulnerability in the face of ongoing stillness that is framed by the shimmering yet sparse sonic landscape. The composer writes: "I thought of Thisbe's decision not to flee from the lioness as being symbolic of a break in the way women are traditionally portrayed, and I wanted the music to discretely highlight this moment in a continuous way, like a thread that is woven into the fabric of the entire opera." Integrated into the orchestral and choral writing are the subtle sounds of a string quartet, mandolin, harp, and ringing percussion like the chimes and vibraphone. The opera has no climactic moment of tragedy in a traditional sense. Thisbe's call to Pyramus—"Don't sacrifice yourself, be yourself!"—is intended as an invitation to throw off the dogma of the past, as the two lovers enter the vulnerable world of stillness reflected in the nature-evoking German poetry of Rilke.

A keen student of visual art, Monk Feldman has various ideas about the visual aspects of the opera: "stylistically minimal, yet soft-edged," as she writes in the suggestions for staging. Likewise, in the music, the variation of the musical colour is key. In the words of scholar Benjamin Levy, who provided liner notes for a recently released selection of Monk Feldman's piano and chamber works: "In Monk Feldman's work the melodic figures, while beautiful and expressive, are the starting point for more intensive exploration of instrumental color, texture, and registral shapes and contours." These pivotal moments of subtle change in the opera are intended to reflect, in the words of the composer, "small moments of shifting catharsis, rather than a single moment of catharsis." Although the inherent nature of each of the texts in the libretto is very diverse, the music provides a backdrop for a sonic field of consistency, and searches to make manifest "a thread of similarity" among the texts. All of these stylistic musical techniques allow for a compelling and hypnotic performance experience that eschews traditional notions of drama.

Amy C. Beal is Professor of Music at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is the author of three books: New Music, New Allies: American Experimental Music in West Germany from the Zero Hour to Reunification *(2006),* Carla Bley *(2011), and* Johanna Beyer (2015).



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To uphold the safety of the building, oversized bags and parcels may be prohibited from entering R. Fraser Elliott Hall. Patrons are reminded that R. Fraser Elliott Hall is an extremely lively auditorium and that all audience noise will be accentuated and audible to other patrons. Turn off all electronic devices, avoid talking, coughing, humming, moving loose seats, kicking the backs of seats, rustling programs, and unwrapping candies or cough drops. In consideration of patrons with allergies please avoid wearing strongly perfumed beauty products and fragrances. Please remain in your seat until the performance has completely ended and the house lights have been turned on.

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The use of mobile and smartphones and all other electronic devices is extremely disruptive and is strictly prohibited during performances. If a patron has an emergency and needs to be contacted during a performance, he or she should contact Patron Services for assistance before the performance.

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The use of cameras, video cameras or sound-recording devices of any kind is prohibited in R. Fraser Elliott Hall during performances. Any person using an unauthorized recording device while the performance is in progress will be required to surrender or erase any recordings, photographic or digital images and may be asked to leave. No refunds will be issued.

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In the interest of safety and for the comfort of all patrons and performers, latecomers may not enter the auditorium or be seated unless there is a suitable break in the performance (usually intermission). Patrons leaving the auditorium during the performance or returning late after intermission may not be readmitted or may be accommodated in an alternate viewing location.

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All patrons, including children, must have a ticket for the performance. All children must be seated next to an accompanying adult. Young children should be able to sit quietly throughout the performance. If unable to do so, children and their accompanying adult will be asked to leave the auditorium. Babes-in-arms will not be admitted.

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Located in the Lower Lobby, the following services are available: coat and parcel check, booster seats, back supports, infrared hearing-assistive devices and rental of binoculars, on a first-come, first-served basis.

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The Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts Box Office also services ticketing needs for The National Ballet of Canada and all other Four Seasons Centre events.

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BACKSTAGE AND BEYOND!

Last spring, our wonderful COC donors helped us celebrate the end of a great season at some unforgettable events, including parties, galas, and backstage meet-and-greets with artists.

1 Great minds think alike as Life Trustees Council member Earlaine Collins, Chief Advancement Officer Christie Darville, and Golden Circle member Ninalee Craig find themselves in matching prints of black and white at the company's Summer Recital.

2 COC Board of Directors Treasurer Paul Bernards, Arlene Baker, and Golden Circle members Shurla Gittens and Jonathan Morgan (COC Board of Directors) at the Opening Night Party for the COC's new production of *The Barber of Seville* in April 2015.

3 President's Council member and artist sponsor Margaret Harriett Cameron embraces Ensemble Studio soprano Aviva Fortunata at the Summer Recital.

4 Chair of the Life Trustees Council David Ferguson and Chair of the Canadian Opera Foundation Phil Deck share a toast at the Summer Recital.

5 Music Director Johannes Debus with Marjorie and Roy Linden at a reception following the Ensemble Studio mainstage performance of *The Barber of Seville*. The Lindens generously underwrote the performance, making possible this critical component of our young artist training program.

6 Ensemble Studio pianist Jennifer Szeto and Ensemble Studio soprano Karine Boucher celebrate the Ensemble Studio mainstage performance of *The Barber of Seville* with Vice Chair, COC Board of Directors Colleen Sexsmith.

7 The young artists of the Ensemble Studio perform a special recital at a Behind-the-Scenes event for our Friends of the COC, President's Council and Golden Circle members.

8 General Director Alexander Neef and members of the Ensemble Studio bid adieu to COC Music Administrator Sandra Gavinchuk (centre), whose retirement in 2015 capped a four-decade career that moved from performer to administrator.

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