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Roger Honeywell as Narraboth and Helen Field as Salome in the COC production of *Salome*, 2002. Photo: Michael Cooper



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Anna Christy as Lucia in the English National Opera production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, 2008. Photo: Clive Barda

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY  
Spring 2013

## Performance

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*Salome*: Helen Field as Salome in the Canadian Opera Company production of *Salome*, 2002. Photo: Michael Cooper  
*Dialogues des Carmélites*: Patricia Racette as Madame Lidoine (centre) in Lyric Opera of Chicago's production of *Dialogues des Carmélites*, 2007. Photo: Robert Kusel

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The COC presents  
*Dialogues des Carmélites*.  
 Isabel Bayrakdarian  
 as Blanche de la Force  
 in the Lyric Opera of Chicago  
 (LOC) production, 2007.  
 Photo: Robert Kusel



# A DANCE TOWARDS THE LIGHT:

## ROBERT CARSEN AND MICHAEL LEVINE DISCUSS DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES

BY CLAIRE MORLEY

Director Robert Carsen and set designer Michael Levine created their production of Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* for the Netherlands Opera in 1997. Since then, it has been performed in numerous cities across the world. Carrying "overwhelming emotional force" (*Chicago Tribune*), this is the first time their production of *Carmélites* will be seen in Toronto, an exciting venture for Carsen and Levine, both Toronto-born.

According to Carsen, the unique power of *Dialogues des Carmélites* lies in its ability to "speak to humanity in a very particular way. You don't have to be Catholic to be moved by the sacrifice that these 16

Carmelite nuns made. It's very powerful because of both the spiritual and intellectual quality of the work; these are people who have dedicated their whole lives to their beliefs, and achieve some kind of good through them."

Carsen and Levine, who have worked together for over 25 years on 26 productions, began their creative process by going directly to the score, paying careful attention to both Georges Bernanos' libretto and Poulenc's masterful setting, which Carsen argues is in a class of its own. "The quality of Poulenc's writing is so beautiful and very seductive. The orchestration is brilliant,

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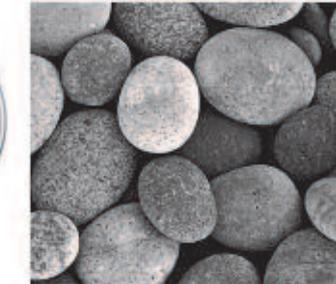
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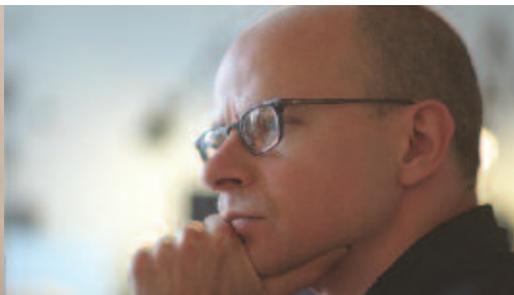
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Robert Carsen



Michael Levine

consisting of strange, electrifying moments, yet the whole work has a genuine and honest sincerity to it. It's a very unusual piece of writing."

The musical climax of the piece is saved for the final scene, in which the nuns sing the famous "Salve Regina" and, one by one, are executed by guillotine until only Blanche is left singing, having finally accepted her faith. Intensely tragic though this ending may be, Carsen felt strongly that Poulenc's score also evoked a sense of something more profound taking place. "The music is remarkable for this ending, and we wanted to try to find a way to deal with what we heard in it, which is both very powerful yet has a sense of something positive happening. You hear this in the music, which is so ravishingly beautiful. So we have treated this not just as a horror story with the guillotine, but in a more stylized way which I call a 'dance towards the light.'"

Levine adds, "When Robert and I work, we always begin with the music and the story, and we try to find a way that will make it come alive for the audience. We take these pieces that were written anywhere from the 17th through to the 20th century and try to present them to an audience today in a way that is both accessible and exciting. That doesn't necessarily mean turning it on its head and setting it in a Laundromat in Chinatown - it doesn't have to be that. For us, it's more about discovering the intention behind the piece."

So much of this intention, Levine argues, is informed by the French Revolution. "We wanted to give the sense and feeling of what it would be like to be an aristocrat with revolution on the doorstep. That is a difficult story to tell and get across to an audience. Quite early, we decided the best way to illustrate that was to have a large group of revolutionaries on stage slowly close in. In order to give some sense of the anxiety within the piece, which is very apparent in the score, the revolutionaries slowly encroach on the aristocrats and nuns. We realized that the way to define these spaces was by using people."

These various senses of space are some of the most powerful aspects of the production. Carsen says, "It's really a space in which the audience has to believe. We use people, not objects, to delineate it, and I decided not to use any scenic elements that would *describe* where you are. I felt very strongly that it was wrong to have any theatricalized religious elements, so there are no crucifixes apart from on the rosary, and no religious scenery - it is all done in a much more abstract way. Religious scenic elements on the stage can very easily go kitsch on you, and I wanted to avoid that."

"I don't think it's possible to do it in a more minimalistic way, and I couldn't think of the work as being anything other than an empty space - like the emptiness of a cell. If you think of a monk or a nun praying



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in a completely undecorated space, you can imagine this 'faith space.'" Levine adds, "As soon as you bring an object into that space, it places great importance on that object. You can define it in other ways - we try to define the emotion of the scene in an empty space defined by the people on stage and the lighting."

Carsen believes that these spaces will be complemented by the aesthetic of the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts (FSC). "Apart from Amsterdam, we have never done this production in a really modern opera house," he says, "and the FSC will be an incredible support to this production. Even the production's colour tones are very much in harmony with the hall. And with one of the best casts we've ever had, I think it's going to be very powerful to hear this in that theatre."

Levine adds that he is particularly excited

to bring it to Toronto because of his pride in the production. "It feels good to do something that, after 16 years, is still a very strong piece of work. That is very rare and I'm thrilled to see it finally make its way to Toronto, to one of the best newly designed opera houses in the world, and one that I really love."

Carsen is similarly enthusiastic about bringing it to Toronto audiences. "I think wherever one performs it, it inevitably has an extraordinary impact; Poulenc's personal circumstances while he was writing the work are very much in the DNA of this piece. You feel his personal suffering very poignantly in the opera. I really believe this is Poulenc's masterpiece, and I can't wait for everyone to rediscover it." ■

*Claire Morley is the Communications Assistant at the Canadian Opera Company.*

FOR FURTHER INSIGHT INTO *DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES*, PLEASE READ JON KAPLAN'S INTERVIEW WITH ISABEL BAYRAKDARIAN, ADRIANNE PIECZONKA AND JUDITH FORST, AVAILABLE IN THE SPRING ISSUE OF *PRELUDE* ONLINE AT [COC.CA/PUBLICATIONS](http://COC.CA/PUBLICATIONS).

A scene from the LOC production, 2007.  
Photo: Robert Kusel



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A DANCE TOWARDS THE LIGHT:  
Robert Carsen and Michael Levine discuss *Dialogues des Carmélites*

Supernumeraries are, as both Robert Carsen and Michael Levine attest, a crucial part of their production of *Dialogues des Carmélites*, forming the menacing mass of French revolutionaries who are an ever-present threat throughout the opera. Indeed, there are over 100 in this production.

## SUPER JIM LUCAS!

Meet Jim Lucas, supernumerary-extraordinaire! Jim has been a “super” with the COC in approximately 60 productions, beginning with *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1990, in which he recalls having to navigate a tricky spiral staircase dressed as a lackey while holding a sword. He remembers his hands trembling with nerves when he shared a scene with the Marschallin, sung by soprano Carol Vaness, but that initial experience got him hooked.

Jim had been a COC subscriber prior to trying his luck as a super, but his love for opera has grown with his experience. “Being part of the COC family, you discover a great understanding about the art form, especially if you’re working with a great director,” he says. “It’s not like you just show up and stand there; you develop your own story and your own character. Opera seems bare and minimal at the beginning, but then you get on stage, in costume, and it all comes together in live performance. Sure, it’s a hobby. But a very rewarding hobby.”



(l - r) Alan Held as Gianni Schicchi and Jim Lucas (as a corpse!) in the COC production of *Gianni Schicchi*, 2012. Photo: Michael Cooper

Congratulations, Jim, on your 23 years with us! The COC is proud to have you as part of the family.

FOR MORE OF JIM’S INTERVIEW, PLEASE GO ONLINE TO OUR BLOG AT [COC.CA/PARLANDO](http://COC.CA/PARLANDO).

## IN MEMORIAM

The COC would like to note the passing of John Bertram, who, for many years, was one of our most experienced and accomplished supers. As the harassed maitre d’ in *La Bohème*, a role he played many times, the drunken doctor in *Peter Grimes* or a lowly servant in *Fidelio*, he was always a favourite of COC stage managers and directors. Like many of our supers, John had a career outside opera, but loved to be on stage and part of the show. He will be missed by many in the opera world and we acknowledge him for his many hours of hard work, talent and dedication on our stage.

John Bertram in the COC production of *Peter Grimes*, 2003.



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# DIALOGUES DES CARMÉLITES: OPERA BACKGROUND



The premiere of *Dialogues des Carmélites* took place at La Scala, Milan in January 1957, and was performed in Italian. The original French version premiered that same year at the Opéra national de Paris.

Widely considered to be Poulenc's greatest masterpiece, the evolution of *Dialogues des Carmélites* is a unique one, fueled by numerous, very personal recollections, adaptations and interpretations of the actual story of an order of Carmelite nuns. It was first recollected by Mère

Marie, a Carmelite nun from the monastery at Compiègne (in northern France) who survived the French Revolution and recalled the events in her memoirs. It wasn't until the early 1930s that Gertrud von le Fort, a German novelist who had recently converted to Catholicism, read these memoirs and was inspired to write *Die Letzte am Schafott* (*The Song at the Scaffold*). It was von le Fort who created the character of Blanche de la Force, the novel and opera's protagonist, going so far as to bestow her own name on Blanche.

Von le Fort's novel was eventually adapted into a film script by Georges Bernanos, which also served as the opera's libretto. Bernanos, who was dying while adapting the script, gave his own age to the dying Prioress, calling 59 a "good age to die."

Poulenc set about composing the work based on Bernanos' script in 1953, after receiving a commission from La Scala. Tragically, Poulenc's personal life was deeply painful throughout the entire composition process. His lover was dying, and just as Poulenc was finishing the work, passed away. As writer/director Jeremy Sams points out in *The New Penguin Opera Guide*, *Dialogues des Carmélites* "is an opera about terror. Personal terror played against state terror:"

This terror permeates the entire opera, whether it be simmering just beneath the surface in the form of the ever-encroaching revolutionaries; or in the Old Prioress's scene, where her faith is called into question; or perhaps, most powerfully, in the final scene of the opera when fear is subdued by faith.

Top: Francis Poulenc, 1960.  
Photo: John Jonas Gruen

Isabel Bayrakdarian as Blanche de la Force in the LOC production, 2007.  
Photo: Robert Kusel



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ALEXANDER NEEF, General Director

# SALOME

by Richard Strauss

Opera in One Act. Libretto by Hedwig Lachmann after the play by Oscar Wilde.

First performance: Dresden Hofoper, December 9, 1905

COC Revival

Co-production of the COC, Houston Grand Opera and Vancouver Opera

Last performed by the COC in 2002

April 21, 27, May 1, 4, 7, 10, 16, 22, 2013

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## THE CAST

(in order of vocal appearance)

Narraboth, <i>a captain</i>	Nathaniel Peake
The Page of Herodias	Maya Lahyani
First Soldier	Evan Boyer
Second Soldier	Sam Handley
Jochanaan, <i>John the Baptist</i>	Martin Gantner (April 21, 27, May 1, 4) Alan Held (May 7, 10, 16, 22)
A Cappadocian	Neil Craighead†*
Salome, <i>daughter of Herodias</i>	Erika Sunnegårdh**
A Slave	Claire de Sévigné†
Herodias, <i>wife of Herod</i>	Hanna Schwarz
Herod, <i>Tetrarch of Judea</i>	Richard Margison
First Jew	Adrian Thompson
Second Jew	Michael Colvin^
Third Jew	Michael Barrett^
Fourth Jew	Adam Luther^
Fifth Jew	Jeremy Milner
First Nazarene	Craig Irvin
Second Nazarene	Owen McCausland†***

Conductor: Johannes Debus  
Derek Bate (May 22)

Director: Atom Egoyan  
Set Designer: Derek McLane  
Costume Designer: Catherine Zuber  
Lighting Designer: Michael Whitfield  
Projections Designer: Phillip Barker  
Choreographer: Serge Bennathan  
Shadow Designer: Clea Minaker  
Stage Manager: Jenifer Kowal  
SURTITLES™ Producer: Gunta Dreifelds

Performance time is approximately one hour and 40 minutes with no intermission.

**Salome** has been generously underwritten in part by Mark and Gail Appel.

Johannes Debus is generously sponsored by Anne and Tony Arrell.

\*\*Erika Sunnegårdh's performance is generously sponsored by Kristine Vikmanis.

\*\*\*Owen McCausland's performance is generously sponsored by Peter and Hélène Hunt.

\*Neil Craighead's performance is generously sponsored by Catherine Fauquier.

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† Current member of the COC Ensemble Studio

^ Graduate of the COC Ensemble Studio

Program information is correct at time of printing. All casting is subject to change.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

In his play *Salome*, Oscar Wilde made significant changes to the biblical version of the story in which King Herod – so pleased with Salome's dance at his birthday feast – promises his stepdaughter half of his kingdom. Also, according to the Bible, it's Salome's mother who insists her daughter demand John the Baptist's head on a platter. Wilde, however, has Herod promise his stepdaughter anything she wants *before* she dances, with Salome violently rejecting any intervention from her mother, and it's this narrative on which the libretto for Richard Strauss's opera is closely based. Salome begins her famous dance knowing exactly what she wants and how she will get it.

Just as Wilde reinterpreted the story, I felt a pressing need to make certain things clearer – to find some justification for Salome's horrific behaviour. Why is this young woman so violent? What is it in her upbringing that has brought her to demand the murder and mutilation of her object of lust? Rather than portray Salome as a stereotype of a femme fatale (and understanding this was just the sort of decadent *fin de siècle* myth that many artists had found so compelling), my reading of the opera began to focus on its latent themes of voyeurism and frustrated desire.

It also led me to clarify the details of her upbringing in this malevolent and grotesque setting. In this way, the violence that Salome witnessed and experienced could be seen to result in her act of violence. Just as Strauss's music had penetrated – in his own words – “the uttermost limits of harmony... and of the receptivity of modern ears,” I felt it was possible to stage the work in a manner that would similarly challenge a modern viewer's expectations. My starting point is the observation that if one's experience of childhood has been destroyed, then one's behaviour – without intervening help – will often be destructive.

This production gives Salome more authority than the mere exercising of her youthful sensuality. It gives her the power that comes from understanding Herod's history of abuse, and the knowledge that she has discovered a way of using that knowledge against him. Respecting the dramatic intentions of both the rich poetic text and Strauss's turbulent and jarring score, I hope to create a mood and interpretation where Salome's final action can be understood in a new and psychologically coherent way.

**Atom Egoyan**

## SYNOPSIS

Salome, princess of Judea, lives in the palace of her mother, Herodias, and stepfather, Herod. Imprisoned in a well beneath the palace is the prophet Jochanaan (John the Baptist). Salome leaves Herod's dining hall, troubled by the way her stepfather looks at her. Hearing Jochanaan's voice, she becomes enthralled by it. Salome seductively convinces Narraboth, the captain of the guard who is secretly in love with Salome, to bring Jochanaan up from the cistern. Jochanaan is contemptuous of Herodias, and Salome, her obsession growing, praises his beauty, begging him to let her kiss his mouth. Jochanaan ignores Salome's advances, refusing even to look at her, warning her she is damned. Meanwhile Narraboth, overcome with jealousy, kills himself.

Herod and his entourage appear in search of Salome, and discover Narraboth's body. Although suffering hallucinations from the burden of his conscience, Herod flirts with Salome, offering her lavish gifts, which she refuses. Herodias reprimands her husband for staring lasciviously at her daughter, and they argue. Jochanaan's voice is heard from the cistern, proclaiming

the coming of the Judgement Day. A group of Jewish scholars, resident in the palace, disagrees over the rumour that Jochanaan has seen God. Herod and a pair of Nazarenes jump into the argument, and the voice of Jochanaan is heard condemning Herodias. Herodias demands silence and Herod asks Salome to dance. Initially refusing, Salome agrees once Herod has promised that she may name her reward.

When her dance is finished, Salome requests her reward: Jochanaan's head. Herod is horrified and tries to change Salome's mind with offers of magnificent gifts, which she refuses. Since Herod has sworn an oath, Jochanaan is beheaded and his head brought to Salome.

Salome sings to the head as if it were alive. She asks Jochanaan why he still refuses to look at her, and chastises him for having cursed her. If only he had looked at her, she is sure he would have loved her. The moon emerges from behind a cloud, illuminating Salome engaged in a passionate kiss with the head of Jochanaan. Herod cries out an order to “kill that woman,” and Salome is put to death.

## ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

### MUSIC STAFF

Timothy Cheung  
John Hess

Eric Weimer (*Head of Music Preparation*)

### GERMAN LANGUAGE COACH

Adreana Braun

### ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Derek Bate

### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Marilyn Gronsdal

### ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS

Lesley Abarquez  
Kate Porter

### ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNERS

Wendy Greenwood  
Davida Tkach

### SHADOW PERFORMERS

Faye Dupras  
Clea Minaker

### DANCER

Linnea Swan

### UNDERSTUDIES

*Narraboth* Christopher Enns  
Owen McCausland  
*The Page of Herodias* Rihab Chaieb  
*First Soldier* Jan Vaculik  
*Second Soldier* Neil Craighead  
*Jochanaan* Craig Irvin  
*Salome* Rayanne Dupuis  
*Herodias* Megan Latham  
*Herod* Adrian Thompson  
*First Jew* Taras Chmil  
*Second Jew* Stephen Bell  
*Third Jew* John Krieter  
*Fourth Jew* Stephen McClare  
*Fifth Jew* Gene Wu  
*First Nazarene* Neil Craighead

## FILM AND PROJECTED IMAGES CREDITS

### DIRECTOR

Phillip Barker

### PRODUCER

Simone Urdl

### PERFORMERS

*Salome* Kristin Dagmar  
*Young Salome* Brittney Cassidy  
*Herod* David Ramsden  
*Herod's Attendant* Rebecca Bailey

### CINEMATOGRAPHERS

Phillip Barker  
René Sauvé

### PRODUCER'S ASSISTANT/ FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Caroline Klein

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Ed Burtynsky

### GAFFER/GRIP

Luc Montpellier

### ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ORIGINAL STAGE PRODUCTION

Roman Hurko



### MICHAEL BARRETT

#### Third Jew

An Ensemble Studio graduate, Canadian tenor Michael Barrett's COC credits include Spalanzani in *The Tales of Hoffmann*,

the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* (Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour), American/Gondolier (*Death in Venice*), Monostatos (*The Magic Flute* - Ensemble), Trojan Man 1 and High Priest of Neptune (*Idomeneo* - Ensemble), Trojan Man 1 (mainstage), Lieutenant Bonnet and Aide de Camp (*War and Peace*), First Prisoner (*Fidelio*), Gamekeeper (*Rusalka*), Captain of Archers (*Simon Boccanegra*), Snout (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), and Ferrando (*Così fan tutte* - Ensemble). Other appearances include Spalanzani and Nathanaël in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Edmonton Opera), Monostatos (Vancouver Opera) and Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw* (Against the Grain Opera Theatre).



### MICHAEL COLVIN

#### Second Jew

An Ensemble Studio graduate, tenor Michael Colvin's COC credits include Idomeneo/Arbace (*Idomeneo*), Ferrando

(*Così fan tutte*), Grimoaldo (*Rodelinda*), Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Lindoro (*L'italiana in Algeri*) and Argirio (*Tancredi*). Other roles include Bob Boles in *Peter Grimes* (BBC Proms, Opera de Oviedo, English National Opera/ENO); Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw* (ENO); Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Minnesota Opera); and Don Ottavio (Chicago Opera Theater). Upcoming appearances include Mayor Upfold in *Albert Herring* (Vancouver Opera) and Bob Boles with both the London Philharmonic Orchestra with Jurowski and L'Accademia di Santa Cecilia with Pappano. Mr. Colvin also appears as the Chaplain in *Dialogues des Carmélites*.



### EVAN BOYER

#### First Soldier

American bass Evan Boyer is making his COC debut. This season he completes his tenure at the Lyric Opera of

Chicago's Ryan Opera Center. He has appeared this season at Lyric Opera as Pietro in *Simon Boccanegra*, Hans Schwarz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, and previously as Luther in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Mitiukha in *Boris Godunov*, Lakai in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, and the King in *Aida*. He made his U.K. debut as Sarastro (Garsington Opera) and has performed Créon in *Médée* and Oreste in *Giasone* (Chicago Opera Theater). Mr. Boyer also appears as the Second Commissioner in *Dialogues des Carmélites*.



### NEIL CRAIGHEAD

#### A Cappadocian

Ensemble Studio bass-baritone Neil Craighead recently appeared as Publio in *La clemenza di Tito* (Ensemble

performance) and Pinellino in *A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi*. Other COC roles include Sciarrone in *Tosca*, the Usher in *Rigoletto*, the First Priest (mainstage) and the Speaker in *The Magic Flute* (Ensemble), a Youth and Russian Father in *Death in Venice*, the Oracle and a Trojan Man in *Idomeneo*, the Official Registrar in *Madama Butterfly* and, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Japanese Envoy 2 in the COC's *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*.

**CLAIRE DE SÉVIGNÉ****A Slave**

Ensemble Studio soprano Claire de Sévigné is a native of Montreal and recently appeared with the COC as Servilia in

*La clemenza di Tito* (Ensemble performance) and *Ida* in *Die Fledermaus*. Ms de Sévigné received her master's degree in opera from the University of Toronto. Recent appearances include the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, Flaminia in *Il mondo della luna*, and Cunegonde in *Candide* (UofT); and, Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare* (Thirteen Strings Orchestra). This summer she will perform the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* (Music Academy of the West). This season Ms de Sévigné also appears as *Une Voix* in *Dialogues des Carmélites*.

**MARTIN GANTNER****Jochanaan**

German baritone Martin Gantner is making his COC debut. Recent appearances include

Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* (Teatro Comunale Bologna); Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* and Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Zurich); Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier* (Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich Opera Festival, Dresden); Jochanaan (Theater St. Gallen); Sprecher in *Die Zauberflöte* (Salzburg Festival), Pizarro in *Fidelio* (Theater an der Wien); Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* (Bayerische Staatsoper); and, Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* (Los Angeles Opera). Other performances in the 2012/2013 season include *Fidelio* (Zurich, Vienna); *Der Rosenkavalier* (Dresden, Zurich); and, *Tristan und Isolde* (Ghent/Antwerp). Upcoming engagements include the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Der Rosenkavalier* (Bayerische Staatsoper),

*Rienzi, der Letzte der Tribunen* (Salzburg Festival) and the Music Master (Opéra Bastille, Paris).

**SAM HANDLEY****Second Soldier**

American bass-baritone Sam Handley is making his COC debut. This season, he makes his

European and role debut as Escamillo in *Carmen* (Theater Aachen); sings Hans Foltz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); and, finishes the season with *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Seattle Opera). Recently Mr. Handley made his Asian debut as Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Beijing) and his Severance Hall and Carnegie Hall debuts in performances of *Salome* (Cleveland Orchestra). Other appearances include Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (Ryan Opera Center) and Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* (Merola Opera Program); and, the title role in *Don Pasquale* (Santa Fe Opera, tour).

**ALAN HELD****Jochanaan**

American bass-baritone Alan Held recently appeared at the COC as Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*, Simone in

*A Florentine Tragedy* and in the title role in *Gianni Schicchi*. He has appeared with many international opera houses, including the Met, Wiener Staatsoper, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Opéra national de Paris, Teatro alla Scala, Teatre del Liceu, Hamburg State Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Mr. Held recently performed the role of Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Nomuri Festival, Tokyo; The Wanderer in *Siegfried* and the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer* at Bayerische Staatsoper; and, the title role in *Wozzeck* at the Met. Other roles include

Wotan in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Orest in *Elektra* and the Four Villains in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*.

**CRAIG IRVIN****First Nazarene**

American baritone Craig Irvin last appeared at the COC as Betto di Signa in *Gianni Schicchi*. This season his credits include

Lt. Horstmayer in *Silent Night* (Opera Company of Philadelphia), and Dick Deadeye in *HMS Pinafore* and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera Saratoga). Other credits include the Four Villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Arlecchino in *Le donne curiose* (Wolf Trap Opera); Lt. Horstmayer in the world premiere of *Silent Night* (Minnesota Opera); Ramfis in *Aida* (Pensacola Opera); Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Des Moines Metro Opera); and, Angelotti in *Tosca*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, and Ashby in *La fanciulla del West* (Lyric Opera of Chicago).

**MAYA LAHYANI****Page of Herodias**

Israeli mezzo-soprano Maya Lahyani is making her COC debut. Recent roles include Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto* with

the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel; and, her debut with Dallas Opera as Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*). Ms Lahyani is an Adler Fellow graduate with San Francisco Opera where she performed Siegrune in *Die Walküre*, Sister Marta and the Duenna in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Wowlke in *La fanciulla del West*, and Beppe in the Merola Opera Program's *L'amico Fritz*. At the International Vocal Art Institute in Tel Aviv she has sung Mother Marie (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Rebecca Nurse (*The Crucible*), the title role in Mascagni's *Zanetto*, and Charlotte (*Werther*).

**ADAM LUTHER****Fourth Jew**

Canadian tenor and Ensemble Studio graduate Adam Luther recently appeared as the Shepherd in *Tristan und Isolde*. Other

COC credits include Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi*, Second Priest in *The Magic Flute* (Ensemble), the Steersman in *The Flying Dutchman*, Roderigo in *Otello*, and Le Remendado in *Carmen*. He recently made debuts as Anatol in *Vanessa* (Pacific Opera Victoria) and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* (Toronto Operetta Theatre), as well as performing the tenor roles in Stravinsky's *Renard* and *Le rossignol* (Opéra de Québec). This season with the COC Mr. Luther also appears as Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

**RICHARD MARGISON****Herod**

Canadian tenor Richard Margison last appeared at the COC as Tenor/Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Other COC credits

include Florestan in *Fidelio*, Calaf in *Turandot* and Manrico in *Il Trovatore*. He has appeared throughout North America, Europe and Australia in *Un ballo in maschera*, *Turandot*, *Aida*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Fidelio*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Gioconda*, *Don Carlo*, *Norma* and *1984*. Mr. Margison's recordings include an all-Verdi CD (CBC Records), *Fidelio* (Chandos), *Don Carlo* (Philips) and *Mazeppa* (Deutsche Grammophon). DVDs include *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Virgin Classics), *Tosca* and *1984* (Decca), *La Gioconda* (TDK), and *The Folk Singing Opera Star* (Harbinger Films). An Officer of the Order of Canada and recipient of the Queen's Jubilee Medal, he also holds Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Giulio Gari and Licia Albanese-Puccini foundations.



**OWEN McCAUSLAND**  
Second Nazarene

New Brunswick native and first-year COC Ensemble Studio tenor Owen McCausland recently stepped into

the title role in *La clemenza di Tito* on the mainstage as well as the Ensemble performance. COC credits include the Messenger in *Il Trovatore* and understudying the role of Spalanzani in the COC's *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Other credits include Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* (Opera on the Avalon), Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (Centre for Opera Studies in Italy), Juan in *Don Quichotte* (Opera Nova Scotia), Spoletta in *Tosca* (Maritime Concert Opera) and Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* (Dalhousie Opera Workshop). Mr. McCausland studied music at Dalhousie University and is a multi-year winner at the New Brunswick Competitive Festival of Music.



**JEREMY MILNER**  
Fifth Jew

American bass Jeremy Milner is making his COC debut. His credits include George Benton in *Dead Man Walking*

(Tulsa Opera); Colline in *La Bohème*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, Minotauros in Henze's *Phaedra*, Lodovico in *Otello* and Simone in *Gianni Schicchi* (Opera Philadelphia); Lodovico (Arizona Opera); Gandalf in *The Hobbit* (U.S. premiere) and Crébillon in *La Rondine* (Sarasota Opera); Billy Jackrabbit in *La fanciulla del West* and the Fifth Jew (San Francisco Opera); and, the Captain in Martinů's *The Greek Passion* and Pharnaces in *Der König Kandaules* (Teatro Massimo, Palermo). Upcoming appearances include Second Soldier in *Salome* (Palm Beach Opera); T. J. Rigg in *Elmer Gantry* (Tulsa Opera); and, Hagen in *Götterdämmerung* (Grand Théâtre de Genève).



**NATHANIEL PEAKE**  
Narraboth

American tenor Nathaniel Peake is making his COC debut. His appearances include Tamino in *The Magic*

*Flute* (San Francisco Opera); Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (Seattle Opera); Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Minnesota Opera); Alfredo in *La Traviata* (Syracuse Opera); Albazar in *Il turco in Italia*, Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the title role in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* and Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd* (Wolf Trap Opera); Pinkerton, Arturo, Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* (Houston Grand Opera); and, Second Priest/Armoured Man in *Die Zauberflöte*, Don José in *La tragédie de Carmen*, and Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette* (Syracuse Opera). Mr. Peake is also performing Arturo in the COC's *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



**HANNA SCHWARZ**  
Herodias

Mezzo-soprano Hanna Schwarz is making her COC debut. Her many roles include Erda, Fricka and Waltraute in the *Ring*

*Cycle* and Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* (Bayreuth); *Ring Cycle* (San Francisco Opera, Met, Bavarian State Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Hamburg, Royal Opera House Covent Garden); *Parsifal*, *Die Zauberflöte*, Countess Geschwitz in *Lulu* and Herodias (Salzburg Festival); Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Carmen (with Plácido Domingo), Amme (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) and Klytämnestra (*Elektra*); and, contemporary works by Hans Werner Henze, Mauricio Kagel, Pierre Boulez, Alfred Schnittke and Leonard Bernstein. Recent and future engagements include Erda in *Das Rheingold* (Seville); the

Countess in *Pique Dame* (Basel); Herodias (Salzburg Festival and Tokyo); Old Buryjovka in *Jenůfa* (Deutsche Oper Berlin and Zürich); and, Mother Wesener in *Die Soldaten* (Bayerische Staatsoper).



**ERIKA SUNNEGÅRDH**  
Salome

Swedish-American soprano Erika Sunnegårdh is making her COC debut. Her appearances include Chrysothemis in *Elektra*

(Grand Théâtre de Genève); Salome (Tokyo, Bayerische Staatsoper, Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Welsh National Opera, Teatro del Liceu, Teatro Petruzzelli di Bari, Florentine Opera); Leonore in *Fidelio* (Oper Köln, Oper Frankfurt, Met, Florentine Opera); Tosca (Oper Frankfurt, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Royal Swedish Opera, Nashville Opera); Turandot (Met, Deutsche Oper, Malmö Opera, NorrlandsOperan); Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer* (Oper Köln, Atlanta Opera); Verdi's Lady Macbeth (Glyndebourne, Vienna State Opera); Paulina in the world premiere of Jonas Forssell's *Death and the Maiden* and *Jenůfa* (Malmö); and, in *Die Walküre*, Helmwig (Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg) and Gerhilde (Met Tour, Japan). Ms Sunnegårdh's concert performances include the Berlin Philharmonic; Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig; Met Orchestra (Carnegie Hall); RAI Orchestra; Swedish Radio, Gothenburg and Malmö symphonies; and, the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic.



**ADRIAN THOMPSON**  
First Jew

English tenor Adrian Thompson last appeared at the COC as Mao Tse-tung in *Nixon in China*. Operatic credits include

the title role in *Peter Grimes*, Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier* (Royal Opera House Covent Garden); Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (La Scala); Mime in *Siegfried* (Nationale Reisopera); Monostatos (Strasbourg); title role in Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence); *Osud* (Garsington Opera); Eisslinger in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Mr. Upfold in *Albert Herring*, Monsieur Triquet in *Eugene Onegin* and the School Teacher in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Glyndebourne Festival); and, the Great Convict in *From the House of the Dead* (Teatro Massimo, Palermo).



**JOHANNES DEBUS**  
Conductor

COC Music Director Johannes Debus recently conducted the company's *Tristan und Isolde*. Other COC credits include

*Die Fledermaus*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Love from Afar*, *Rigoletto* and, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*. This past January Mr. Debus made his Toronto Symphony Orchestra debut with an all-Mozart program. Last year he made his Cleveland Orchestra debut with *A Night at the Opera* at the Blossom Festival. In 2010 he made his Tanglewood Festival debut conducting *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and subsequently appeared with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Debus recently conducted *Elektra* and *The Rake's Progress* at Staatsoper unter

den Linden in Berlin, and appeared at the Spoleto Festival, Bayerische Staatsoper, Opéra Festival de Québec and the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera. This season at the COC he also conducts *Dialogues des Carmélites*.



### ATOM EGOYAN

#### Director

Acclaimed Canadian director Atom Egoyan, whose internationally award-winning films include *The Sweet*

*Hereafter*, *Exotica*, *Ararat*, *Adoration* and *Chloe*, returns with his COC signature production of *Salome*. He also directed *Die Walküre* as part of the COC *Ring Cycle*. Mr. Egoyan's many awards include two Academy Award nominations for *The Sweet Hereafter*; the Grand Prix, International Critics Award and the Ecumenical Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival; and, the Toronto International Film Festival and Genie Awards, among others. He is the recipient of the Chevalier des Arts et Lettres from the French government, the Anahid Literary Award (Armenian Center, University of Columbia) and is an Officer of the Order of Canada. At this summer's Luminato Festival Mr. Egoyan will direct the Canadian premiere of the Chinese opera *Feng Yi Ting*.



### DEREK McLANE

#### Set Designer

American Derek McLane also designed the COC's *Jenůfa* and *Lulu*. His opera and theatre designs have appeared throughout North America, as well as London, Dublin, Glasgow, Moscow, Krakow, Caracas, Sydney, and Warsaw. Mr. McLane, who recently designed the 2013 Academy Awards, is a Tony Award-winning scenic designer for 33 *Variations*. Broadway credits include

*The Heiress*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Follies*, *Anything Goes*, *How to Succeed in Business*, *Ragtime*, *Grease*, *Little Women*, *The Pajama Game*, *The Women*, *Present Laughter* and *London Assurance*, as well as many off-Broadway productions. His opera designs include Atom Egoyan's *Feng Yi Ting* (Spoleto and Lincoln Center).

Numerous awards include multiple OBIE and Lucille Lortel Awards and the 2011 Drama Desk Award.



### CATHERINE ZUBER

#### Costume Designer

Catherine Zuber's opera credits include *Le comte Ory*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Doctor Atomic*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*

(Met); *Two Boys*, *Carmen* (English National Opera); *Roméo et Juliette* (Salzburger Festspiele); *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Washington National Opera and San Francisco Opera); *Le Grande Macabre* (New York Philharmonic); and, *South Pacific* (Sydney Opera House). On Broadway she has won Tony Awards for *South Pacific*, *The Coast of Utopia*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Awake and Sing!* and *The Royal Family*; and nominations for *How to Succeed in Business*, *Born Yesterday*, *Oleanna*, *Golden Boy*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, Edward Albee's *Seascape*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Cry-Baby*, *Mauritius*, *Doubt*, *Little Women*, *Dracula*, *Dinner at Eight*, and *Twelfth Night*, among others.



### MICHAEL WHITFIELD

#### Lighting Designer

Michael Whitfield has designed lighting for more than 70 COC productions including *Madama Butterfly*,

*Wozzeck* and *The Golden Ass*. Other operatic credits include *Faust* and *Rigoletto* (San Diego Opera), *Simon Boccanegra*

(San Francisco Opera), *La Cenerentola* (Opéra de Montréal), *Salome* (Vancouver Opera and Houston Grand Opera), *Così fan tutte* (Edmonton Opera), *La Bohème* (Calgary Opera), *The Pearl Fishers* (Opera Ontario), *Tornrak* (Welsh National Opera), and *La Belle Hélène* (Netherlands Opera). Mr. Whitfield was the resident lighting designer for the Stratford Festival for over 25 years. He has also designed for the Finnish National Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada, American Ballet Theater, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre and the Shaw Festival, among others.



### PHILLIP BARKER

#### Films and Projections

Canadian film director, production designer, artist and screenwriter Phillip Barker received a Directors Guild of Canada

Award for Outstanding Achievement in Production Design for Atom Egoyan's *Where the Truth Lies*. As well as being production designer for such directors as Brian De Palma, Mira Nair, and Neil LaBute, he also designed the set, costumes and film projections for Atom Egoyan's opera *Elsewhereless*, and choreographer Susanna Hood's dance piece *Still*. His film-based installations have toured internationally and include commissions by ARCO International Art Fair in Madrid, The City of Amsterdam Arts Foundation, and Expo '92 in Seville, Spain. Mr. Barker's own internationally acclaimed films have won numerous awards including Canada's Top Ten (2012) at TIFF for his recent short film *Malody*.



### SERGE BENNATHAN

#### Choreographer

Serge Bennathan has choreographed numerous productions for the COC including *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Salome*,

*Faust*, *Julius Caesar*, *Venus und Adonis*, *Mario and the Magician* and *Jenůfa*, and directed *Tancredi* and the COC Ensemble production of *Renard*. Artistic director of Toronto's Dancemakers (1990 to 2006), he now resides in Vancouver where he has created Les Productions Figlio, producing works including *The Invisible Life of Joseph Finch*, *Manga*, *Slam for a Time Traveler*, *Conversations* and *The Strange Adventure of Myself*. A multiple Dora Mavor Moore Dance Award winner, Mr. Bennathan received the prestigious Rio Tinto Alcan Award 2012 with which he created his latest production *Elles*. He has choreographed for Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, Ballet British Columbia and The National Ballet of Canada, among others.



### CLEA MINAKER

#### Shadow Designer and Performer

Canadian Clea Minaker is making her COC debut. Ms Minaker trained at the International Puppetry

Institute in Charleville-Mézières, France (2002 to 2005). As a performer, designer and director, she brings the language of contemporary puppetry to creations in theatre, film, and music. In 2007/2008 she toured internationally with the Canadian singer Feist, designing and performing live shadow puppetry on *The Reminder Tour*. She has taught workshops at Concordia, UBC, McGill, and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. In 2009, puppeteer Ronnie Burkett, a recipient of the Siminovitch Prize for Theatre Design, awarded Ms Minaker with the Siminovitch

Protégé Prize. She premieres her solo performance, *The Book of Thel*, at Montreal's Théâtre La Chapelle in November 2013.



**JENIFER KOWAL**  
Stage Manager

This is Jenifer Kowal's 21st season with the COC. Recently for the COC she was stage manager for *La clemenza di Tito*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Semele*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Aida* and, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, for *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*. Ms Kowal was the production stage manager for Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera's *Miss Saigon*, which also toured to Toronto and Schenectady. Previous COC credits include *Carmen*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Fidelio*, *War and Peace*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Don Carlos*, *La Traviata*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and all COC productions of the *Ring Cycle*. Ms Kowal studied theatre at Indiana University.



**DEREK BATE**  
Conductor/Assistant Conductor

Resident conductor  
Derek Bate recently conducted a performance of *La clemenza di Tito*.

Also with the COC, he has led performances of *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, *Madama Butterfly*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Luisa Miller*, *Eugene Onegin*, *La Bohème*, *Carmen*, *Turandot*, *La Traviata*, *Die Fledermaus* and served as assistant conductor for *Die Fledermaus*, *Love From Afar*, *A Florentine Tragedy/Gianni Schicchi*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Nixon in China*, *Cinderella*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *War and Peace* and the complete *Ring Cycle*, among others. Mr. Bate conducts frequently with Toronto Operetta Theatre, and was musical director for *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Show Boat*.



**MARILYN GRONSDAL**  
Assistant Director

Marilyn Gronsdal was recently the assistant director for *Tristan und Isolde* and *Il Trovatore*. Other COC credits

include director of *La Bohème*, associate director of *Eugene Onegin*, production assistant director for the COC's *Ring Cycle* and assistant director on several productions that have been presented elsewhere - *Oedipus Rex with Symphony of Psalms* (Edinburgh), *La Traviata* (New Zealand), *Siegfried* (Lyon) and *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (Brooklyn Academy of Music). Recent credits include directing *Don Pasquale* for Saskatoon Opera and remounting the COC's *Der fliegende Holländer* in Montreal. She was recently a jury member in the Helikon-Opera's International Competition for Young Opera Directors in Moscow. Ms Gronsdal returns to Saskatoon Opera in May to direct *Carmen*.

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### Carsen's *Dialogues des Carmélites* on DVD



**DVD *Dialogues des Carmélites***, Arthaus. The COC's current Robert Carsen production is seen in its 2004 staging at Milan's Teatro alla Scala with Riccardo Muti conducting. Dagmar Schellenberger sings a moving Blanche, while two singers who have figured prominently in past COC seasons, Gwynne Geyer and Barbara Dever, sing the key roles of Madame Lidoine and Mother Marie respectively. **\$44.50 including tax**

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# CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY ORCHESTRA

## VIOLIN I

Marie Bérard, *Concertmaster*  
*The Concertmaster's chair*  
*has been endowed in*  
*perpetuity by Joey and*  
*Toby Tanenbaum*  
Benjamin Bowman, *Associate*  
*Concertmaster*  
Diane Tait, *Assistant*  
*Concertmaster*  
Anne Armstrong  
Sandra Baron  
Bethany Bergman  
Hiroko Kagawa\*  
Nancy Kershaw  
Jamie Kruspe\*  
Lynn Kuo\*  
Dominique Laplante  
Yakov Lerner  
Jayne Maddison  
Neria Mayer  
Aya Miyagawa  
Alexey Pankratov\*

## VIOLIN II

Paul Zevenhuizen, *Principal*  
Csaba Koczó, *Assistant*  
*Principal*  
James Aylesworth  
Christine Chesebrough\*  
Andrew Chung\*  
Allene Chomyn\*  
Corey Gemmell\*  
Eric Fujita\*  
Elizabeth Johnston  
Megan Jones\*  
Renée London\*  
Laurel Mascarenhas\*  
Marianne Urke, on leave  
of absence  
Sonia Vizante\*  
Louise Tardif  
Ashley Vandiver\*  
Joanna Zabrowarna

## VIOLA

Keith Hamm, *Principal*  
Joshua Greenlaw, *Assistant*  
*Principal*  
Carolyn Blackwell\*  
Ivan Ivanovich\*  
Valerie Kuinka\*  
Rory McLeod\*  
Karen Moffat\*  
Nicholaos Papadakis\*  
Rhyll Peel  
Angela Rudden\*  
Beverley Spotton  
Yosef Tamir

## CELLO

Bryan Epperson, *Principal*  
Alastair Eng, *Associate*  
*Principal*  
Paul Widner, *Assistant*  
*Principal*  
Maurizio Baccante  
Peter Cosby\*  
Garrett Knecht\*  
Olga Laktionova  
Loewi Lin\*  
Marianne Pack\*  
Elspeth Poole\*  
Elaine Thompson, on leave  
of absence

## BASS

Alan Molitz, *Principal*  
Robert Speer, *Assistant*  
*Principal*  
Brian Baty\*  
Tom Hazlitt  
Paul Langley  
Eric Lee\*  
Hans Preuss\*  
Robert Wolanski\*

## FLUTE

Douglas Stewart, *Principal*  
Christine Little\*  
Maria Pelletier\*

## PICCOLO

Shelley Brown

## OBOE

Mark Rogers, *Principal*  
Jasper Hitchcock\*

## ENGLISH HORN

Lesley Young

## HECKELPHONE

Harry Searing\*

## CLARINET

James T. Shields, *Principal*  
Margaret Gillie\*  
James Ormston\*  
Michele Verheul\*

## E-FLAT CLARINET

Marie-Julie Chagnon\*

## BASS CLARINET

Colleen Cook

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A scene from the COC's *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*, 2009. Photo: Michael Cooper

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The President's Council and Golden Circle programs help make possible many of the company's activities. New productions, the COC Ensemble Studio program, our education and outreach initiatives – these are just a few of the reasons why President's Council and Golden Circle gifts are so crucial to our future.

President's Council and Golden Circle members share in the excitement of opera in new ways through events and activities, receive personalized service for ticket purchases and exchanges, and enjoy exclusive use of the Henry N. R. Jackman Lounge at all opera performances.

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For more information about supporting the COC Ensemble Studio, please call **416-847-4949** or visit **coc.ca**.



Ambur Braid as Vitellia and Rihab Chaieb (kneeling) as Sesto in the COC Ensemble Studio performance of *La clemenza di Tito*, 2013. Photo: Michael Cooper

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A scene from the COC's *Gianni Schicchi*, 2012. Photo: Michael Cooper

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The COC presents *Lucia di Lammermoor*.  
Anna Christy as Lucia (centre) in a scene from the  
English National Opera (ENO) production, 2008.  
Photo: Clive Barda



# BEL CANTO AT ITS BEST

## DAVID ALDEN DISCUSSES LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

BY SUZANNE VANSTONE

Gothic romance. Scottish wildness. Early-Victorian repression. Director David Alden showcases his riveting production of Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the COC this spring. Based on Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the opera follows a young girl's descent into madness. Lucia is embroiled in a conflict between her brother, Enrico and her lover, Edgardo. Barely a woman, she is treated as a mere possession, and those who should have her best interests at heart are the same culprits who gradually chip away at her fragility.

Internationally renowned director David Alden is excited about mounting this production in Toronto and directing in our opera house for the first time. "*Lucia* is amazing - it's one of the very strongest pieces in the *bel canto* repertoire. This production is set in the early-Victorian period, where society was very strong, rigid, hierarchical and patriarchal. Obviously underneath those rigid codes and societal structures there was passion and love and madness which burst through these very strong repressions. That's what this opera is all about.



David Alden Photo: Dario Acosta

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Anna Christy as Lucia in the ENO production, 2008.  
Photo: Clive Barda



“Implicit in this work is the terrible buildup of tension on Lucia – the slow hammering away of a girl who is really just a child. She is totally isolated with her brother, and there is almost an Edgar Allan Poe sense of an incestuous brother-sister relationship which is close and passionate, but turns violent and explodes into madness.”

Alden says that madness was often the climax of operas from that period, but to not mistake madness and florid cadenzas as superficial. He says that the stereotypical view of Donizetti operas, especially *Lucia*, as purely *bel canto* vehicles for the “canary” of the day is somewhat outdated. Certainly the music exploits the beauty and flexibility of what the human voice can accomplish, but he maintains that *Lucia* is a very well written piece of drama and there is nothing frivolous or amusing about the madness. “Donizetti was a storyteller and Donizetti was a theatre person – the dramaturgy is very tight.

“I have always taken the musical aspect of this opera very seriously. There are no cuts in the production. *Lucia* has been abused over the decades, the structure of it not taken seriously. Obviously there is a certain freedom in the *bel canto* music which is part of the tradition, but we are getting back to the basics.” He says the overall structure of this piece is brilliant. The tension keeps mounting, first with Enrico, who then turns it upon his sister and the manipulation becomes more desperate and extreme. Alden says, “The final eruption into the mad scene is justly famous because it’s incredibly well timed. It’s very shocking but it’s also deeply satisfying. The audience is released into this other dimension, the way Lucia is released into another corner of her mind.” ■

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

FOR FURTHER INSIGHT INTO *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*, PLEASE READ GIANMARCO SEGATO'S INTERVIEW WITH SOPRANO ANNA CHRISTY, AVAILABLE IN THE SPRING ISSUE OF *PRELUDE* ONLINE AT [COC.CA/PUBLICATIONS](http://COC.CA/PUBLICATIONS).

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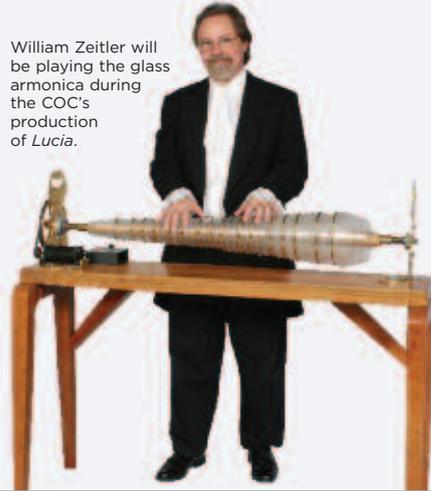
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## THE GLASS ARMONICA

Donizetti originally composed the mad scene aria for glass armonica accompaniment, which provides a delicate, other-worldly sound, mimicking Lucia's tenuous grasp on reality. However, after a dispute with the glass armonica player before the premiere, Donizetti rewrote the part for flute. A flute is still traditionally used, but patrons are in for a rare treat as the COC will employ the glass armonica as originally written. Director David Alden says, "It was often thought to be impractical, a romantic idea on paper - not the case. It's an extraordinary instrument and creates an amazing soundscape in the mad scene which is very unusual and deeply disturbing."



William Zeitler will be playing the glass armonica during the COC's production of *Lucia*.



Barry Banks as Edgardo and Anna Christy as Lucia in the ENO production, 2008. Photo: Clive Barda

## AN UNEXPECTED INSPIRATION

While looking for inspiration for this production, set designer Charles Edwards happened to visit a rather famous large manor house in England known as Normansfield. It had been owned by John Langdon Down, a doctor in the 19th century who studied and classified a condition that later became known as Down's Syndrome. Down lived in this manor but also turned it into an asylum for people living with the syndrome. Interestingly, this Victorian manor also housed a theatre which is still functional to this day. It was this combination of a theatre and an asylum that appealed to Alden and they based the *Lucia* set on it. "We have imagined it more in a state of neglect and decay," says Alden, "a Victorian relic of an old house."

FOR FURTHER INSIGHTS INTO THE GLASS ARMONICA, WILLIAM ZEITLER AND THE SET FOR *LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR*, PLEASE VISIT OUR BLOG AT [COC.CA/PARLANDO](http://COC.CA/PARLANDO).

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# LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR: OPERA BACKGROUND



Unlike a lot of artists, Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti (1797 - 1848) achieved enormous success in his lifetime. He had already composed over 30 operas between 1816 and 1830, but it was with *Anna Bolena* (1830) that he gained international fame. *L'elisir d'amore* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* followed quickly and they both remain two of the most-performed operas in the repertoire.

Sir Walter Scott's popular novel *The Bride of Lammermoor* was the basis for *Lucia* and fed Europe's fascination for Scotland at that time. In fact, three librettos already existed before Donizetti composed his own take on the tragedy.

*Lucia di Lammermoor* premiered on September 26, 1835, in Naples. It was an immediate success with critics and audiences alike. Rossini and Bellini had passed the torch and Donizetti was now the king of Italian opera. He wrote of his success with *Lucia*: "...at the risk of sounding immodest... *Lucia*... judging by the applause and compliments I received, pleased the audience very much. Every number was listened to in religious silence and then hailed with spontaneous cheers."

Even before Donizetti's composition, madness had become a popular artistic subject. It is a curious and sad fact that, at the time, certain behaviours exhibited by young women were often attributed to madness. Anything from wilfulness and melancholia, to independence and sexuality might be identified as examples of the weaker natures and minds of women in the 19th century. Consequently, lunatic asylums during this time were mainly populated by women.



*Lucia di Lammermoor* possesses one of the most famous mad scenes in all of opera portraying Lucia's unravelling in a most poignant and terrifying way. Famed interpreters of the challenging title role include Maria Callas and Joan Sutherland. This spring the COC is thrilled to welcome American soprano Anna Christy (seen above). This production, from English National Opera, was created specifically for her and she has sung the role to great acclaim.

Top: Etching by anonymous artist of Gaetano Donizetti, circa 1835

Above: Anna Christy as Lucia in the ENO production, 2008.  
Photo: Clive Barda

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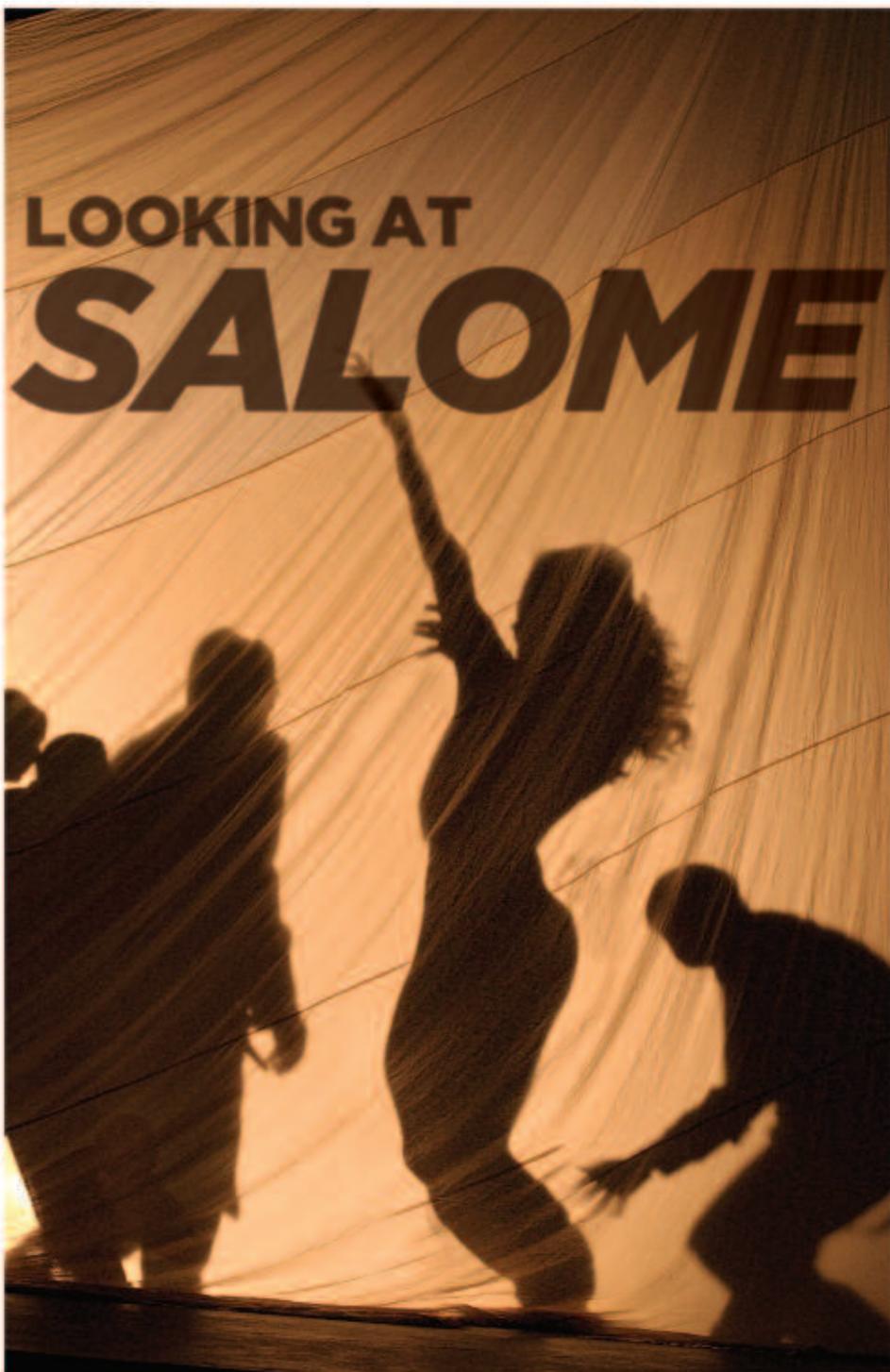
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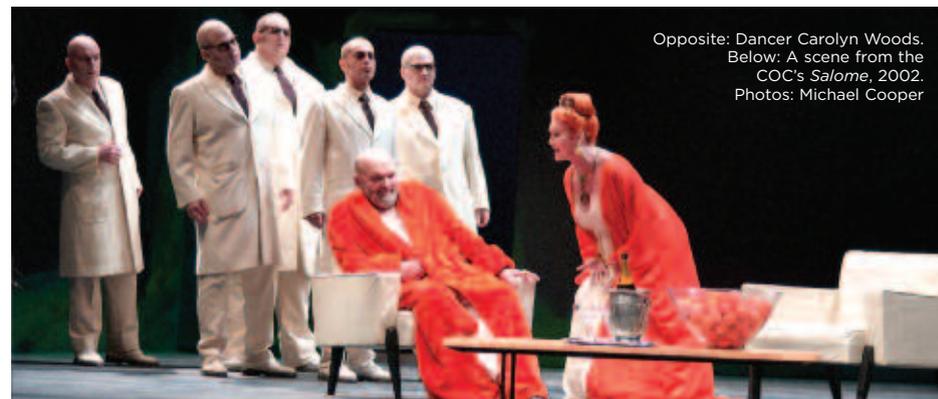
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# LOOKING AT SALOME



Opposite: Dancer Carolyn Woods.  
Below: A scene from the  
COC's *Salome*, 2002.  
Photos: Michael Cooper

BY NIKITA GOURSKI

In 1994, Canadian film director Atom Egoyan won international recognition for his film *Exotica*, a provocative meditation on erotic obsession and psychological trauma explored through the relationship of a nightclub dancer and her male client.

Shortly after *Exotica*'s release, the Canadian Opera Company approached Egoyan with an offer to direct an opera, a story so thematically saturated with voyeurism it seemed ideal for the young filmmaker's sensibility: Richard Strauss's *Salome*.

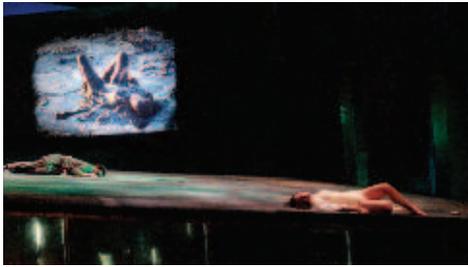
Unveiled in 1996, Egoyan's production simultaneously recognized the deeply disturbing matter of the opera – a work that has inflamed scandal since its 1905 world premiere – while offering a fresh reading responsive to our contemporary culture. Rather than a first-century palace in Judea, Egoyan set the action in an abstract and foreboding environment, something between a spa and a sanatorium. Derek McLane's set design is built around a diagonal plane tilted at a dangerously steep angle, with Jochanaan (John the Baptist) imprisoned underneath the floorboards instead of the subterranean cistern in which he's traditionally kept.

Egoyan's approach focused on the complex circuitry of voyeurism, made explicit in the libretto, and followed it to its disconcerting psychological depths. From the first lines of the opera – “How beautiful the Princess

Salome is tonight,” repeated obsessively by the young Syrian Narraboth – the process of looking is established as a dominant psychological theme in *Salome*. Characters are compulsively observing others, or else being looked at themselves, held visually as objects within a matrix of frustrated desire. “The Page is obsessed with Narraboth, who doesn't return her gaze; Narraboth is obsessed with Salome, who doesn't return his gaze; and Salome is obsessed with Jochanaan, who doesn't return her gaze,” Egoyan says, describing the opera's gridiron pattern of erotic fixation.

To get at the heart of all this looking, Egoyan's production makes use of surveillance equipment, as well as projected film and video images. The guards, for example, become camera-wielding soldiers, whose official “watching” is less about patrolling the perimeter and more about deploying modern technology to direct a collective gaze onto objects of sensual interest: usually Salome. In fact, before we ever see the teenaged princess onstage in the flesh, we encounter a filmed image of her in a series of unsettling shots set in a spa's mud baths.

Similarly, when Jochanaan berates members of Salome's family from offstage, a large video screen positioned behind the singers shows a live feed of his mouth in close-up. The disembodied projection anticipates Salome's fetishistic dissecting



Left: Roger Honeywell as Narraboth and Helen Field as Salome; right: Helen Field as Salome, COC, 2002. Photos: Michael Cooper

of Jochanaan's body parts – skin, hair, mouth – into isolated objects of lust, but it also prefigures the actual, physical decapitation of the prophet. Incorporating film projection in this context elaborates the thread of continuity that runs between the predatory look and the act of unimaginable violence.

In this opera, looking is never benevolent. From *Salome's* opening remarks about the lascivious gaze of her stepfather Herod – “those mole’s eyes... under his quivering eyelids” that look at her “like that” – to the Page warning Narraboth that it’s “very dangerous to look at a human face in such a way,” the desiring gaze has a throbbing underside that threatens to devour and consume.

Nowhere is this truer than the opera’s narrative pivot: the Dance of the Seven Veils. Egoyan’s innovative account gives a dramatic weight and clarity to Salome’s psychology that few interpretations could rival. On a screen created by the billowing skirts of the princess, who is lifted on a swing high up into the rafters, we see “home movies” of the young Salome. In these moments, she is a girl in a world of paper dolls, living through childhood. But we also catch silhouetted glimpses of a disturbing act committed in the shadows, possibly in the near past, but maybe right now: she is being raped by a gang of men. We realize that Salome’s stepfather Herod

oversees the entire sexual atrocity, watching it and thereby giving it licence.

“[Violence] doesn’t come out of nowhere,” Egoyan observes, “and we’ve seen that with abused victims: there is a repetition of the way that they have been treated.” Using the dance to chronicle a history of terrifying acts makes Salome’s subsequent demand for Jochanaan’s head psychologically credible and dramatically focused. Instead of showing the prototypical *femme fatale* – “an unbridled sexuality that leads to ruin,” as Egoyan says – the production depicts an “abused, traumatized character.”

The results carry a sobering impact. Egoyan’s production issues a challenge: it asks us to treat seriously – and understand – how anyone, including a young girl, could instigate such horrific violence. ■

*Nikita Gourski is Development Communications Officer at the Canadian Opera Company.*

FOR FURTHER INSIGHT INTO *SALOME*, PLEASE READ SUZANNE VANSTONE’S INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR ATOM EGOYAN AND SHADOW DESIGNER/PERFORMER CLEA MINAKER, AVAILABLE IN THE SPRING ISSUE OF *PRELUDE* ONLINE AT [COC.CA/PUBLICATIONS](http://COC.CA/PUBLICATIONS).

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# SALOME: OPERA BACKGROUND

The story of Salome derives from the Bible, appearing in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. The episode concerns an unnamed young princess who dances for King Herod and asks for the head of John the Baptist in exchange.



This brief, almost skeletal story has captivated artists through the ages. Painters, sculptors, writers, composers, as well as choreographers, filmmakers and contemporary pop musicians have taken slightly different approaches to the raw material of the story, adding nuance and subtleties to the primary characters, and reinterpreting the action through aesthetic and cultural notions of their time.

One of the most enduring literary interpretations of Salome is Oscar Wilde's play, *Salomé*. Written in French, Wilde's treatment employed deliberately ornate phrasing and layered repetitions that achieved music-like effects.

The play also featured open-ended stage directions for Salome to perform a Dance of the Seven Veils. The fact that the play – and the libretto on which it was based – gave no explicit direction for enacting the dance, opened this decisive moment in the play/opera to any number of possibilities in performance.

After *Salomé* was finished in 1892, the play was banned in England by the Lord Chamberlain's office (as part of a prohibition on any representations of biblical scenes). It was not staged publicly until an 1896 production was mounted in Paris to little fanfare or success. Shortly after the turn of the century however, *Salomé* became a massive hit in Europe.



Before he reached his 40s, Richard Strauss had already established himself as one of his generation's pre-eminent musical minds. Although a prominent conductor and acclaimed composer of orchestral music, operatic success had nonetheless eluded him. But in 1902 Strauss attended a Berlin performance of Wilde's *Salomé*, staged by a young and highly original theatre director named Max Reinhardt. Strauss became convinced that the play was ideal for adaptation as an opera.

When Strauss first played the finished score for his father, the elder Strauss remarked that the music had "ants in its pants." The singers engaged for the premiere were similarly horrified at the demands placed on them by the score, which pushed the limits of dissonance and flirted with atonality. The leading soprano refused to appear in the Dance of the Seven Veils, reportedly saying, "I won't do it, I'm a decent woman." Nonetheless when *Salome* premiered on December 9, 1905, in Dresden, it received an astonishing 38 curtain calls.

Top: Oscar Wilde, circa 1882.  
Photo: Napoleon Sarony

Left: "The Stomach Dance" drawing by Aubrey Beardsley for Wilde's play *Salomé*, 1893



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Every dollar you contribute to the COC until June 30, 2013 will be matched in value by an anonymous donor. That means your gift goes twice as far in helping us pursue artistic projects that make this company great.

From training the next generation of Canadian opera talent, to introducing music into our communities through education and outreach, the vital support of our patrons makes it possible.

To participate in the Year-End Matching Appeal or to learn more, please visit [coc.ca](http://coc.ca) or call us at 416-847-4949.

\* The COC recognizes individual donations with a charitable tax receipt for the maximum amount allowable under the Canada Revenue Agency guidelines.

Video still by Bill Viola for Opéra national de Paris' production of *Tristan und Isolde*, 2004/2005. Photo: Kira Perov



**PINK MARTINI**  
with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra  
Wednesday June 26 8pm  
Roy Thomson Hall

Sponsored by LEXUS  
THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

**CALL 416.872.4255**  
[masseyhall.com](http://masseyhall.com) | [roythomson.com](http://roythomson.com)

## PATRON INFORMATION AND POLICIES

### Etiquette

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.

### Electronic Devices

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.

### Cameras/Recording Devices

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.

### Latecomers

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 will be accommodated in an alternate viewing location.

### Children and Babes-in-Arms

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.

### Patron Services

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.

### Medical Emergencies and First Aid

A house doctor is present at all performances. Please contact an usher if medical services are required.

### Lost and Found

During performances please speak with an usher or visit Patron Services at the Coat Check in the Lower Lobby. Following performances, all lost and found items will be stored at the security desk at Stage Door. Please call **416-363-6671** for information.

### Ticket Services

Canadian Opera Company subscriptions and individual tickets are available through COC Ticket Services

ONLINE: **coc.ca**

BY PHONE: **416-363-8231**

or long distance **1-800-250-4653**

Monday to Friday - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

IN PERSON: Four Seasons Centre Box Office  
145 Queen St. W.

Monday to Saturday - 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

or through first intermission

Sunday (performance days only) -

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. or through first

intermission

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.

### Group Sales

Groups of 10 or more enjoy savings on regular individual ticket prices. For more information or to reserve seats call **416-306-2356**.

### Parking

There is parking on a first-come, first-served basis for about 200 vehicles underneath the Four Seasons Centre. The entrance is located on the west side of York Street, south of Queen Street. Additional parking is conveniently located just steps away in the Green P lot underneath Nathan Phillips Square. For directions visit **greenp.com**.

### Four Seasons Centre Facility Tours

Tours of the Four Seasons Centre now include backstage access! For more information, visit **fourseasonscentre.ca**.

### BMO Financial Group Pre-Performance Opera Chats

The Canadian Opera Company Volunteer Speakers Bureau offers free, insightful chats about the stories, music and background of all COC performances, 45 minutes prior to each performance in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre.

### Food and Beverage Service

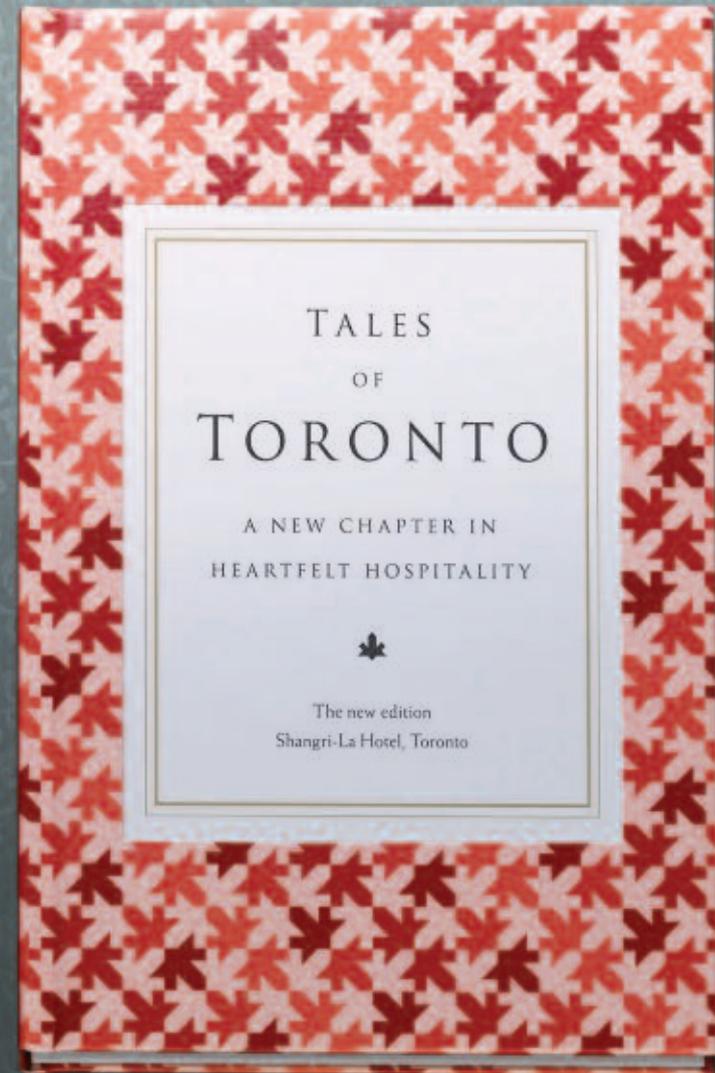
A pre-order system for intermission refreshments is available at all bars throughout the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room. Food and beverages are not permitted in R. Fraser Elliott Hall.

### Special Events and Catering

The Four Seasons Centre is available for rental for all of your presentation, meeting or special events needs, with spaces accommodating from 20 to 2,000 people and full catering services. For further details visit **fourseasonscentre.ca** or call **416-363-6671**.

### The Opera Shop

Located on the orchestra level of the Isadore and Rosalie Sharpe City Room, the COC's Opera Shop offers a fine selection of opera recordings on CD and DVD, as well as opera-related books, giftware and COC souvenirs.



Shangri-La hotel

TORONTO

188 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 0A3, Canada  
T: (647) 788 8888 E: [slto@shangri-la.com](mailto:slto@shangri-la.com) [www.shangri-la.com/toronto](http://www.shangri-la.com/toronto)  
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# IT'S IN THE BLOOD

Many things have changed since the original Land Rover was first conceived in 1947, but despite 65 years of design and engineering our vehicles will always be Land Rover at heart.

[landrover.ca](http://landrover.ca)

