



canadian **OPERA** company

ALEXANDER NEEF, GENERAL DIRECTOR

Xstrata Ensemble Studio
School Tour



Meet the Cast of *The Barber of Seville*



Neil Craighead – *Dr. Bartolo*

Bass Neil Craighead was born in Cape Town, South Africa, and is a new member of the COC Ensemble Studio. He recently sang the role of Japanese Envoy 2 in *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* and the Official Registrar in *Madama Butterfly*. Mr. Craighead graduated from the University of British Columbia with a bachelor of music and was a member of the Vancouver Opera Chorus. He performed Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera NUOVA; the bass solo in *St. John's Passion* with Vancouver Voices; and, Pistola in *Falstaff*, Dr. Furtwängler in *The Dream Healer* and Colline in *La Bohème* with University of British Columbia Opera Ensemble. He has received the Gordon S. Lumb Bursary, the UBC School of Music's 25th Anniversary Scholarship and the Ben Heppner Scholarship. With the COC this season he will perform the Trojan Man 2 in both the mainstage and the Ensemble Studio production of *Idomeneo*.



Riccardo Iannello – *Count Almaviva*

Toronto tenor Riccardo Iannello returns to the COC after understudying the Footman, Fyodor and General Konovnitsyn in *War and Peace* and Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Other performances with the COC include *From the House of the Dead*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. He received his degree in music from the University of Toronto, and his master's in vocal performance at the New England Conservatory of Music. Mr. Iannello also received the C. Jeffrey Mason Award in Vocal Performance from the Kiwanis Music Festival and completed his Royal Conservatory of Music Grade 9 vocal examination with honours. Operatic credits include: John Styx in *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi* and Léon in Thomas Pasatieri's *Signor Deluso* with the New England Conservatory; Tito in *La Clemenza di Tito* with Summer Opera Lyric Theatre; Don José in *Carmen* at the Banff Centre; and, Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte* with Operafestival di Roma. Mr. Iannello is also a member of the COC Chorus.



Teiya Kasahara – *Rosina*

Born in Ottawa, Ontario, COC Ensemble Studio soprano Teiya Kasahara recently performed the solo in *Two Poems by Konstantin Balmont* and understudied the Nightingale as part of *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* as well as understudying Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. She also performed the First French Actress in *War and Peace*, the First Wood Nymph in *Rusalka* and Despina in the Ensemble Studio production of *Così fan tutte*. She is a graduate of the University of British Columbia with a bachelor of music degree in opera performance. Ms. Kasahara recently performed Zerbinetta in Toronto Summer Music's production of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Gianetta in *The Gondoliers* at the Westben Arts Festival, and Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* in the Czech Republic. She has won awards from the Vancouver Women's Musical Society and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. With the COC this season she will perform the role of Frasquita in *Carmen* and understudy the title role in *Maria Stuarda*, as well as Elettra and Cretan Woman 1 in *Idomeneo*.



Adrian Kramer – Figaro

Baritone Adrian Kramer was born in Guelph, Ontario and is a new member of the COC Ensemble Studio. He holds a bachelor of music from the Juilliard School of Music and a master's from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia studying under Marlena Malas. Mr. Kramer's recent operatic credits include the title role in *Pelléas et Mélisande* with Curtis Opera Theatre and Sid in *Albert Herring* with the Châteaueville Festival. He has performed with Glimmerglass Opera, the Chautauqua Institution, Mendelssohn Club, and the Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival. In 2005, he was the winner of the Juilliard Honours Recital Competition. During the COC's 2009/10 season he is understudying the roles of Prince Yamadori and Yakuside in *Madama Butterfly*, the Japanese Envoy 3 in *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* and Moralès and Le Dançaire in *Carmen*.



Ileana Montalbetti – Berta

Originally from Saskatoon, soprano Ileana Montalbetti recently performed Fiordiligi in the Ensemble Studio production of *Così fan tutte* and Mavra Kuzminichna in *War and Peace*. More recently she understudied the role of The Cook in *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*. This past summer, Ms Montalbetti attended the Chautauqua Institute where she sang the role of Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*. She has also held two consecutive soprano fellowships at the Tanglewood Music Centre where she sang the Celestial Voice in a concert version of *Don Carlos* under the baton of Maestro James Levine. Ms Montalbetti is a graduate of the opera diploma program at the University of Toronto, where she performed the roles of Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Countess Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* and the Female Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. She has also appeared as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* for Saskatoon Opera and The Toronto Summer Music Academy. This season with the COC she will sing the roles of Anna Kennedy in *Maria Stuarda* and Cretan Woman 2 in *Idomeneo*. She will also understudy the roles of Elisabetta in *Maria Stuarda* and Elettra in *Idomeneo*.



Simone Osborne – Rosina

Soprano Simone Osborne is a Vancouver, British Columbia native and a new member of the COC Ensemble Studio. She recently sang *Pribaoutki* and the role of Chorus Solo Soprano in *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*. Ms Osborne attended the Music Academy of the West and the University of British Columbia studying under Marilyn Horne and Nancy Hermiston. Operatic credits include the title role in *Mignon* with the Music Academy of the West, Laetitia in *The Old Maid and the Thief* with Wexford Opera Festival, Nannetta in *Falstaff* with University of British Columbia Opera, and she appeared as a guest soloist with the Prince George Symphony. Ms Osborne was the winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2008, Marilyn Horne Foundation Competition in 2008, International Czech and Slovak Voice Competition in 2007, and the University of British Columbia Concerto Competition in 2007. With the COC this season she will perform Frasquita in *Carmen*, Anna Kennedy in *Maria Stuarda* and Ilia in the Ensemble Studio production of *Idomeneo*. Upcoming engagements include performances with the Hong Kong International Music Festival and Edmonton Symphony Orchestra.



Christopher Mokrzewski – Musical Director

Christopher Mokrzewski is a graduate of the COC's Ensemble Studio. He completed his master's of music in piano performance and literature at the Eastman School of Music. Mr. Mokrzewski is also a graduate of the Voice and Vocal Piano Program at the Music Academy of the West and previously studied at The Royal Conservatory of Music. He was also the assistant conductor and coach of *La Cenerentola* with the Bay View Music Festival; music director of *Assassins* and coach and accompanist for *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* with Eastman Opera Theatre; and, coach, accompanist, and assistant chorus master for *Norma* with Mercury Opera Rochester. Other operatic credits include coach, accompanist, and assistant chorus master for *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* with Mercury Opera Rochester, and coach and accompanist for *Cendrillon*, *L'étoile*, and *Claudia Legare* with Eastman Opera Theatre. He was the first prize winner of the 1999 Eastman School of Music International Young Artists Competition and has also been awarded first prizes at the Milosz Magin International Piano Competition and the Canadian Music Competition.



Michael Gianfrancesco – *Designer*

Michael Gianfrancesco designed the production of *The Barber of Seville* for the Xstrata Ensemble Studio School Tour in 2008. He has worked as a set and costume designer for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, Neptune Theatre, Theatre Aquarius, Queen of the Puddings Music Theatre, Canadian Stage and Manitoba Theatre Centre. For the Shaw Festival Mr. Gianfrancesco's credits include costume designer for *In Good King Charles's Golden Days* and assistant costume designer for *A Little Night Music*. Other recent design credits include: the world premiere of The National Ballet of Canada's *In Colour*; the Studio 180/Canadian Stage production of *Blackbird*; productions of *The Blonde, the Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead* at the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Citadel Theatre and Stratford Shakespeare Festival; the Canadian Stage production of *It's a Wonderful Life*; the set for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens's *Kaleidoscope*; and, Studio 180's production of *Stuff Happens*. He is the recipient of the Virginia and Myrtle Cooper Award in Costume Design, the Brian Jackson Award and the Tyrone Guthrie Award.



Joanna Barrotta – *Stage Manager*

Joanna Barrotta has worked for the COC as an assistant stage manager on shows such as *Così fan tutte*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Eugene Onegin*, and *Luisa Miller*, as well as *Götterdämmerung* as part of the complete *Ring Cycle*. Ms Barrotta graduated from York University with a degree in Theatre Production. Other opera credits as an assistant stage manager include: *Inês* with Queen of Puddings; *Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung* with Opéra de Québec; *La Traviata* and *Tosca* with Opera New Brunswick; and, *Actéon/Dido and Aeneas* with Opera Atelier's Korea Tour. Ms Barrotta stage managed *The Brothers Grimm* school tour in 2007. She has also worked as a stage manager in theatre for companies such as the Blyth Festival, Factory Theatre, Buddies in Bad Times, Absit Omen and Company Theatre Crisis. With the COC this season, she will be an assistant stage manager for *Idomeneo*.

Brent Krysa – *Director*