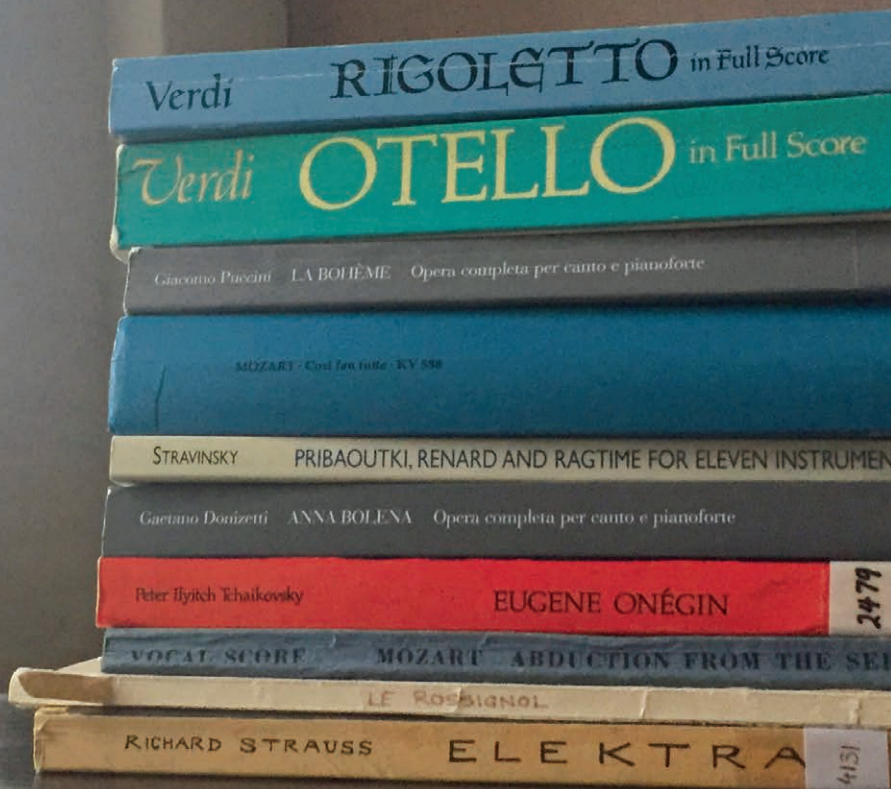




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FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



RIGOLETTO
THE ABDUCTION FROM
THE SERAGLIO
PROGRAM WINTER 2018



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Correction: There was an error in our fall 2017 program. In the article about the Canadian Children's Opera Company (page 38), we stated that David Fallis founded the Toronto Consort. The founder was in fact Timothy McGee. Our apologies for the oversight.

Front cover: Inside a coaching studio at the COC

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A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL DIRECTOR ALEXANDER NEEF

Art that's truly about something has a way of addressing us in the present tense, regardless of when it was composed.

Rigoletto (1851)—based on a Victor Hugo play that had already been banned in its native France when Verdi selected it as his source material for an opera—was immediately seen as a problem by state authorities. As Verdi worked on the score, censors in Venice refused to grant the opera permission for performance and only allowed it to move forward once the setting was changed from the royal court to a provincial duchy. By displacing the opera's subject matter in this way—resituating *Rigoletto's* searing critique from the very centre of power to a far-flung province—censors sought to minimize the incendiary nature of Verdi's drama.

But encountering the opera in 2018, in the era of #MeToo, invites us to approach *Rigoletto* on its own terms, those that elicited an allergic reaction from the powerful. By taking the opera seriously, in other words, one discovers at its centre a woman destroyed not simply by a man, but by a world that authorizes unchecked male privilege and whitewashes it with laughter, or dismisses the worst examples of its predation as merely isolated phenomena.

Verdi was far from what we would call a feminist, but with *Rigoletto* he reacted strongly against this world of kings and jesters—a world with a contemporary iteration in our own day, peopled with powerful CEOs and moguls.

If Gilda in 1850 can be easily imagined in 2018 as one of Harvey Weinstein's victims, Konstanze in Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (1782) prefigures as a more



hopeful voice, in so far as she gains what the contemporary writer Rebecca Solnit identifies in her book of essays, *Men Explain Things to Me*, as a small but essential victory in women's ongoing struggle for equality: "The ability to tell your own story."

Indeed, the brilliance of Wajdi Mouawad's production is in granting the opera's female characters a new audibility and ownership in the narrative: complex, fully human voices to share their perspectives on what the ostensible culture clash of an East/West binary looks like from their lived experience of it.

This deeply affecting production achieves an equilibrium of speech and music that lets us enter into the profound ambivalence of Mozart's *singspiel* in a new way, to meet there a sense of urgency and wisdom that are as undeniable as they are indispensable to our cultural moment, vexed as it is about who gets to speak and who gets to be heard.

*a voice
can break
your heart*

*or it can
show you
the answer*

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WE PERCEIVE THE WORLD**

In 2018/2019 we're challenging ourselves to look at the fundamental human experience of love through an unexpected array of works that have the capacity to reshape our understanding of our hearts and minds.

RIGOLETTO

BY GIUSEPPE VERDI

Melodrama in three acts ♦ Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave
First performance: Teatro La Fenice, Venice, Italy, March 11, 1851

COC PRODUCTION

A co-production with English National Opera
Last performed by the COC in 2011
Jan. 20, 27, Feb. 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, 17, 21, 23, 2018
Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™

THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

(in order of vocal appearance)

The Duke
Stephen Costello
Joshua Guerrero^{D*}

Borsa
John Kriter

Countess Ceprano
Lauren Eberwein[†]

Rigoletto
Roland Wood

Marullo
Bruno Roy[†]

Count Ceprano
Neil Craighead[^]

Monterone
Robert Pomakov

Sparafucile
Goderdzi Janelidze^D

Gilda
Anna Christy

Giovanna
Megan Latham

Page
Simone McIntosh^{+D}

Usher
Samuel Chan^{+D}

Maddalena
Carolyn Sproule^D

Conductor
Stephen Lord

Director
Christopher Alden

Set and Costume Designer
Michael Levine

Lighting Designer
Duane Schuler

Price Family Chorus Master
Sandra Horst[^]

Stage Manager
Jenifer Kowal

SURTITLES™ Producer
Gunta Dreifelds

* Feb. 11, 17, 23

PRODUCTION ORIGINALLY MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY
TIM & FRANCES PRICE, JUDY & WILMOT MATTHEWS, AND GAIL & BOB FARQUHARSON

Bruno Roy's performance is generously sponsored by Catherine Fauquier

Lauren Eberwein's performance is generously sponsored by Brian Wilks, Marjorie & Roy Linden

Samuel Chan's performance is generously sponsored by June Shaw

Simone McIntosh's performance is generously sponsored by David & Kristin Ferguson

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

^D COC mainstage 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.

Performance time is approximately two hours and 25 minutes, including one intermission.

ACT I: 55 minutes **INTERMISSION 25 minutes** **ACTS II and III: 65 minutes**

*Ekaterina Sadovnikova was Gilda and Quinn Kelsey was Rigoletto
when this COC production premiered in 2011.*

NOTES

Rigoletto is an incendiary work. Its dramatic source, Victor Hugo's play *Le roi s'amuse*, was banned after its first performance at the Comédie Française and not performed again for half a century. Although set in the Renaissance, it deals with the inequalities of the social structure in Hugo's and Verdi's own time. Written in a heightened melodramatic mode, it is pointedly accusatory regarding the abuses of monarchy. It is a nightmare about an all-powerful and irresponsible ruler.

The title role of *Rigoletto* retains much of the bile and acid humour of the jester in Hugo's play, somewhat humanized by Verdi. The anti-hero is dark and brooding, locked into his own obsessions and repressed fantasies. In public life, as part of the nasty and competitive little world of the Duke's court,

he has climbed to the top of the ladder of power by dint of his malicious wit. Mocked by others because of his physical deformity, he has achieved success as a brilliant mocker. In his private life, Rigoletto reveals a positively schizophrenic new personality, sweetly sentimental in his desire to keep his daughter pure and uncorrupted by the outside world.

Rigoletto is a genius of denial. His obsession with Monterone's curse as the source of his misfortune is an easy way out of facing up to his own responsibility as the master of his fate. He is a paradigm of the patriarchal 19th-century male whose power is built on the subjugation of women, disenfranchised and locked safely away at home, while he goes to work in the newly industrialized, dog-eat-

dog Darwinian jungle. Gilda is an image of Rigoletto's soul, kept pure and uncorrupted, far from the soulless marketplace. Rigoletto's mistake is in thinking he can neatly divide himself into these two separate compartments. When the barriers between them come crashing down, Rigoletto unwittingly kills the thing he loves.

In this production, instead of moving from one naturalistic locale to the next, Michael Levine and I are placing all the events of *Rigoletto* in what we call "the gaming room," where the men retire after dinner to smoke and drink, read their papers, and play games of power, control, and domination. The room represents both sides of Rigoletto's life, the workplace and the home. The Duke, a personification of unbounded libido, rules

there. The trump card he holds over the men of his court is that at any moment, in full view and fully within his feudal rights, he could seduce their women and humiliate them in the process.

Hugo's play offered Verdi the golden opportunity to move beyond the conventional tenor/soprano/baritone clichés of the era. He insisted on writing *Rigoletto*, despite warnings from all quarters that the censors would never let it pass. The result is an opera which raises the Donizettian/Bellinian/Rossinian modes to new expressive heights.

Christopher Alden
Director, 2011

In the COC's 2011 production, *Rigoletto* (Quinn Kelsey, second from right) mocked a cuckolded Count Ceprano (Alain Coulombe, seated far right), in a "gaming room" where mischief and cruelty abound.





SYNOPSIS

ACT I

The Duke arrives at a party in his palace and boasts to his guests of his conquests with women, telling them that he has just seen a beautiful young woman in a nearby church, but that her identity is unknown to him. Count Monterone then enters and publicly accuses the Duke of ruining his daughter. Monterone is arrested and is mocked by Rigoletto, the Duke's jester, as he is led away. Monterone responds by laying a curse on Rigoletto. Later, following a brief meeting with the assassin Sparafucile who offers to rid Rigoletto of any enemies he might have, Rigoletto returns to his home where he lives with his beautiful daughter, Gilda. The Duke has since learned that the girl he saw at the church lives in this house and he enters the courtyard. He waits for Rigoletto to leave, and proceeds to woo the innocent Gilda, telling her that he is a poor student. Meanwhile some of the Duke's courtiers enter, wishing to avenge the cruel taunts of the hated jester and plot to punish Rigoletto. They believe Gilda is Rigoletto's mistress and trick him into helping them kidnap her. Only when they are taking her away does Rigoletto realize he's been fooled. Rigoletto remembers Monterone's curse.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

The courtiers return to the palace with Gilda. The Duke is relieved to learn she has not disappeared, and takes her to his private chambers. Rigoletto arrives and is refused entry to the chamber by the Duke's courtiers. He reveals to all assembled that Gilda is his daughter and, soon after, she rushes out and into the arms of her father. Gilda tells Rigoletto how the Duke stole her heart by playing the role of a humble student, and although he has ruinously deceived her, she still loves him. Rigoletto swears vengeance on the Duke.

ACT III

Maddalena, Sparafucile's sister, has lured the Duke to an inn. Rigoletto has hired Sparafucile to carry out the offer proposed earlier and pays him. He instructs Sparafucile to deliver the Duke's corpse to him by midnight. Maddalena has become fond of the Duke and convinces Sparafucile to spare his life and take the life of the next person to enter the inn. Gilda, overhearing their conversation, decides to sacrifice herself out of love for the Duke; she enters and is stabbed. Rigoletto returns to claim his corpse, and upon hearing the Duke in the distance, opens the sack to discover the body of Gilda. As Gilda dies asking for forgiveness, Monterone's curse is fulfilled.

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

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

VIOLIN II

Paul Zevenhuizen, *Principal*
Csaba Koczó, *Assistant Principal*
James Aylesworth (leave of absence)
Jennie Baccante*
Kimberly Durlinger**
Corey Gemmell*
Elizabeth Johnston
Aya Miyagawa
Lynn Kuo*
Renée London*
Alexey Pankratov*
Louise Tardif (leave of absence)
Marianne Urke
Joanna Zabrowarna (leave of absence)

VIOLA

Keith Hamm, *Principal*
Joshua Greenlaw, *Assistant Principal*
Carolyn Blackwell*
Lucas Alan Blekeberg**
Catherine Gray
Sheila Jaffé
Rory McLeod*
Nicholaos Papadakis*
Beverley Spotton
Yosef Tamir (leave of absence)

CELLO

Bryan Epperson, *Principal*
Alastair Eng, *Associate Principal* (leave of absence)

Paul Widner, *Assistant Principal*
Daniel Wachsmuth, *Acting Assistant Principal**
Maurizio Baccante
Kimberly Jeong**
Olga Laktionova
Elaine Thompson

BASS

Tony Flynt, *Acting Principal**
Robert Speer, *Assistant Principal*
Tom Hazlitt
Paul Langley
Freddy Speer**
Robert Wolanski*

FLUTE

Douglas Stewart, *Principal*
Shelley Brown (leave of absence)
Leslie Newman*

PICCOLO

Leslie Newman*

OBOE

Mark Rogers, *Principal*
Lesley Young

ENGLISH HORN

Lesley Young

CLARINET

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

BASSOON

Eric Hall, *Principal* (leave of absence)
Samuel Banks, *Acting Principal**
Lisa Chisholm

HORN

Mikhailo Babiak, *Principal*
Janet Anderson
Bardhyl Gjevori
Gary Pattison

TRUMPET

Robert Weymouth, *Principal*
Michael Fedyshyn*

TROMBONE

Charles Benaroya, *Principal*
Ian Cowie

BASS TROMBONE

Herbert Poole

CIMBASSO

Scott Irvine, *Principal* (leave of absence)
Jennifer Stephen*, *Acting Principal*

TIMPANI

Michael Perry, *Principal*

PERCUSSION

Trevor Tureski, *Principal*

Banda

PICCOLO
Maria Pelletier*

CLARINET

James Ormston*
Michele Verheul*

BASSOON

William Cannaway*

HORN

Roslyn Black*
Michele Gagnon*
David Quackenbush*

TRUMPET

Andrew Dubelsten*

TROMBONE

David Pell*

PERCUSSION

Ryan Scott*

.....

MUSIC LIBRARIAN

Wayne Vogan

ASSISTANT MUSIC LIBRARIAN

Ondrej Golias

STAGE LIBRARIAN

Paul Langley

PERSONNEL MANAGER

Ian Cowie

*extra musician

** Member of COC Orchestra Academy

MUSIC STAFF

Ben Malensek (*Head Coach*)
Andrea Grant
Rachael Kerr
(*Ensemble Studio Coach*)

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Derek Bate

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Marilyn Gronsdal

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS

Lesley Abarquez
Kate Porter

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNERS

Davida Tkach
Mikael Kangas

UNDERSTUDIES

Rigoletto Gregory Dahl
Gilda Danika Lorén
Sparafucile Neil Craighead
Giovanna Megan Quick
Marullo Samuel Chan
Count Ceprano Jan Vaculik
Countess Ceprano Simone McIntosh
Page Lauren Eberwein

DANCER

Sarah Williamson



Mireille Asselin as Countess Ceprano and Alain Coulombe as Count Ceprano (COC, 2011).

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY CHORUS

TENORS

Vanya Abrahams
Stephen Bell
Taras Chmil
Stephen Erickson
William Ford

Jason Lamont
James Leatch
Stephen McClare
Eric Olsen

BARITONES/BASSES

Kenneth Baker
Bruno Cormier
Michael Downie
Jason Nedecky
Michael Sproule

Jan Vaculik
Marcus Wilson
Gene Wu
Michael York

BIOGRAPHIES: RIGOLETTO



CHRISTOPHER ALDEN, Director (New York City, NY, USA)
COC CREDITS: *Pyramus and Thisbe* (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Clorinda e Tancredi*) (2015); *La clemenza di Tito* (2013); *Die Fledermaus* (2012); *Rigoletto* (2011); *The Flying Dutchman* (2009, 2000, 1996). RECENT: *Il Turco in Italia* (Polish National Opera); *Partenope* (English National Opera); *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Wuppertaler Bühnen); *Sweeney Todd* (Glimmerglass Festival). UPCOMING: Bernstein's *Peter Pan* (Bard SummerScape Festival); *The Makropulos Case* (Oper Bonn); *Gianni Schicchi* and *La Vida Breve* (Opera North).



DEREK BATE, Assistant Conductor (Toronto, ON)
COC CREDITS: *Louis Riel*, *Arabella*, *Götterdämmerung* (2017); *Norma* (2016); *Carmen*, *Siegfried*, *Pyramus and Thisbe* (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Clorinda e Tancredi*) (2015); Conductor, *Don Quichotte* (2014); *Carmen* (1979). RECENT: (as conductor) *Candide*, *The Pirates of Penzance* (Toronto Operetta Theatre); *Rigoletto* (Opéra de Québec). UPCOMING: *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (COC).



SAMUEL CHAN, Usher (Baritone, Calgary, AB)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: Morales, *Carmen* (Brott Music Festival); Don Asdrubale/Calandrino/Gomatz, *Lo sposo deluso*, *L'oca del Cairo*, and *Zaide* (City Opera Vancouver); Jacob Grimm/the Donkey, *The Brothers Grimm/The Bremen Town Musicians* (Highlands Opera Studio). UPCOMING: 2nd Japanese Envoy, *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (COC).



ANNA CHRISTY, Gilda (Soprano, Pasadena, CA, USA)
COC CREDITS: Lucia, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (2013). RECENT: Sophie, *Werther* (Metropolitan Opera); Morgana, *Alcina* (Teatro Real and Santa Fe Opera); Lucia, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Florida Grand Opera and Opera Colorado); Gilda, *Rigoletto* (English National Opera); Soeur Constance, *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Bayerisches Staatsoper). UPCOMING: Adele, *Die Fledermaus* (Des Moines Metro Opera).



STEPHEN COSTELLO, Duke of Mantua (Tenor, Philadelphia, PA, USA)
COC CREDITS: Edgardo, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (2013). RECENT: Rodolfo, *La Bohème* (Teatro Real Madrid); Camille, *The Merry Widow* (Paris Opera); Duke of Mantua, *Rigoletto* and Roméo, *Roméo et Juliette* (Metropolitan Opera). UPCOMING: Duke of Mantua, *Rigoletto* (Deutsch Oper Berlin and Semperoper Dresden); Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* (Munich Philharmonic); Rodolfo, *La Bohème* (Semperoper Dresden); Fernand, *La Favorite* (Gran Teatre del Liceu).



NEIL CRAIGHEAD, Count Ceprano (Bass-baritone, Calgary, AB)
SELECT COC CREDITS: Second Armed Man, *The Magic Flute* (2017); Dr. Grenvil, *La Traviata* (2015); Nottingham's Servant, *Roberto Devereux* (2014); Publio, *La clemenza di Tito* (Ensemble Studio Performance, 2013). RECENT: Pietro, *Simon Boccanegra* (Pacific Opera Victoria); Leporello, *#UncleJohn* (Against the Grain Theatre); Sarastro, *The Magic Flute* (Edmonton Opera). UPCOMING: Zuniga, *Carmen* (Opéra de Québec).



LAUREN EBERWEIN, Countess Ceprano (Soprano, Qualicum Beach, BC)
COC CREDITS: Giannetta, *The Elixir of Love* (2017); Wellgunde, *Götterdämmerung* (2017). RECENT: Artist in Residence (Marlboro Music Festival); Soloist (Gamut Bach Ensemble, Philadelphia); *Franz Liszt: Holy and Infernal Genius* (Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center); Olivia, *Cold Mountain*; Clairon, *Capriccio*; Der Komponist, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Opera Philadelphia); Handel's *Israel in Egypt* (New York Choral Society/Carnegie Hall). ADDITIONAL: Recipient of a 2016 Sullivan Foundation Career Grant.



MARILYN GRONSDAL, Assistant Director (Toronto, ON)
COC CREDITS: *The Elixir of Love*, *Götterdämmerung* (2017); *Norma* (2016); Associate Director, *Siegfried* (2015/2016); Director, *La Bohème* (2009). RECENT: (as director) *Don Giovanni* (UofT Opera); Director, *La Cecchina* (The Glenn Gould School). UPCOMING: Revival Director, *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (COC).



JOSHUA GUERRERO, Duke of Mantua, Tenor (Los Angeles, CA, USA)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: Edgardo, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Florida Grand Opera); Duke of Mantua (English National Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre); Macduff, *Macbeth* (Opernhaus Zürich and Los Angeles Opera); Alfredo, *La Traviata* (Pécs Plácido Domingo Classics Summer Festival). UPCOMING: Pinkerton, *Madama Butterfly* (Glyndebourne and Santa Fe Opera); Alfredo, *La Traviata* (Washington National Opera).



SANDRA HORST, Price Family Chorus Master Chair (Toronto, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: *Arabella*, *The Elixir of Love*, *The Magic Flute*, *Götterdämmerung* (2017); *Ariodante* (2016); *Norma* (2016, 1998). RECENT: (as conductor), *Prima Zombie: The Diva that just wouldn't stay dead* (UofT Opera). UPCOMING: *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*, *Anna Bolena* (COC). UPCOMING: *Vengeance; Of Thee I Sing* (U of T Opera). ADDITIONAL: Director of Musical Studies at the University of Toronto Opera.



GODERDZI JANELIDZE, Sparafucile (Bass, Moscow, Russia)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: Zaretsky/Company Commander, *Eugene Onegin* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence); Frate, *Don Carlo*; Grenvil, *La Traviata*; Konchak, *Prince Igor*; Yushko Velebin, *The Maid of Pskov*; Second Guest, *The Stone Guest*; Mill-hand/Officer, *Katerina Izmaylova*; A Sergeant, *Manon Lescaut* (Bolshoi Theatre).



JENIFER KOWAL, Stage Manager (Thornhill, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: *Arabella*, *Tosca* (2017); *Maometto II*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Pyramus and Thisbe* (with *Lamento d'Arianna* and *Il combattimento di Clorinda e Tancredi*) (2015). UPCOMING: *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (COC).



JOHN KRITER, Borsa (Tenor, Toronto, ON)
COC CREDITS: Magistrate, *A Masked Ball* (2013); Spoletta, *Tosca* (2012); Borsa, *Rigoletto* (2011); Hotel Porter, *Death in Venice* (2010); Goro, *Madama Butterfly* (2009); COC Chorus member (1986 - Present). RECENT: Thomas Scott, *Louis Riel* (Festival d'opéra de Québec); Goro, *Madama Butterfly* (Edmonton Opera); Second Jew, *Salome* (Edmonton Opera).



MEGAN LATHAM, Giovanna (Mezzo-soprano, Abbotsford, BC)
SELECT COC CREDITS: Fortune Teller, *Arabella* (2017); Rosswisse, *Die Walküre* (2015); Giovanna, *Rigoletto* (2011); Florence Pike, *Albert Herring* (2004). RECENT: Emilia, *Otello* (Vancouver Opera); Third Lady, *The Magic Flute* (Pacific Opera Victoria); Ruth, *Dark Sisters* (Vancouver Opera); Alisa, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Edmonton Opera); Genevieve, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Against The Grain Theatre). UPCOMING: Madame Larina, *Eugene Onegin* (Vancouver Opera); Soloist, Verdi's *Requiem* (Victoria Symphony Orchestra).



MICHAEL LEVINE, Set and Costume Designer (Toronto, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: *The Ring Cycle*; *Bluebeard's Castle/Erwartung* (2015); *Dialogues des Carmélites* (2013); *Oedipus Rex/Symphony of Psalms* (2002); Director, *Das Rheingold* (2006). RECENT: *Madama Butterfly* and *Wozzeck* (Opernhaus Zürich); *Wings* (Young Vic London); *The Rakes Progress* (Festival d'Aix-en-Provence); *Billy Budd* (Teatro Real Madrid); *Le Petit Prince* (National Ballet of Canada); *Benjamin Dernière Nuit* (Opera de Lyon); *Between Worlds* (English National Opera); *The Encounter* (Complicite). UPCOMING: *Die tote Stadt* (Komische Oper Berlin); *Sweeney Todd* (Opernhaus Zürich).



STEPHEN LORD, Conductor (Bolton, MA, USA)
 COC CREDITS: *Norma* (2016 and 1998); *A Masked Ball* (2014); *Lucia di Lammermoor* (2013).
 RECENT: *La Fanciulla del West* (Michigan Opera Theatre); *La Traviata* and *La clemenza di Tito*
 (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); *Norma* (English National Opera).



SIMONE MCINTOSH, Page (Mezzo-soprano, Vancouver, BC)
 COC DEBUT. RECENT: Donna, *Crush* (Banff Centre). UPCOMING: *Mottetti di Montale* (College
 New Music); *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (COC).



ROBERT POMAKOV, Monterone (Bass, Toronto, ON)
 COC CREDITS: Alberich, *Götterdämmerung* (2017); Bartolo, *The Marriage of Figaro* (2016);
 Hobson, *Peter Grimes* (2013). RECENT: The Bonze, *Madama Butterfly* (Metropolitan Opera);
 Luther/Crespel, *The Tales of Hoffman* (Metropolitan Opera); Monterone, *Rigoletto* (Opéra
 National de Paris and Metropolitan Opera); Prince Gremin, *Eugene Onegin* (Oper Frankfurt);
 Mathieu, *Andrea Chénier* (San Francisco Opera). UPCOMING: Oroveso, *Norma* (Oper Frankfurt).



BRUNO ROY, Marullo (Baritone, Montreal, QC)
 COC CREDITS: Count Lamoral, *Arabella*; Second Priest, *The Magic Flute* (2017). RECENT:
 Mercutio, *Roméo et Juliette* (Canadian Vocal Arts Institute); Matt, *Crush* (Banff Centre); Belcore,
The Elixir of Love (Atelier Lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal and Opera McGill); John Brooke, *Little
 Women*; Count Almaviva, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Opera McGill). UPCOMING: *The Nightingale
 and Other Short Fables* (COC).



DUANE SCHULER, Lighting Designer (Seattle, WA, USA)
 COC CREDITS: *Rigoletto* (2011), *Maometto II* (2016), *Norma* (2017). RECENT: *Thaïs* (Metropolitan
 Opera); *Madama Butterfly* (Dallas Opera); *Tosca* (Houston Grand Opera); *Bel canto* (Lyric Opera
 of Chicago); *Ragtime* (5th Ave Theatre). UPCOMING: *Faust* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Luisa
 Miller* and *Cendrillon* (Metropolitan Opera); *Candide* (Santa Fe Opera).



CAROLYN SPROULE, Maddalena (Mezzo-soprano, Montreal, QC)
 COC DEBUT. RECENT: Ulrica, *A Masked Ball* (Teatro Lirico di Cagliari); Page of Herodias, *Salome*
 (Metropolitan Opera); Carmen, *Carmen* (Lakes Area Music Festival); Soloist, *Bravissimo!* New
 Year's Eve Concert (Roy Thomson Hall). UPCOMING: Olga, *Eugene Onegin* (Vancouver Opera);
 Maddalena, *Rigoletto*; Flosshilde, *Das Rheingold* (Opéra de Montréal).



ROLAND WOOD, Rigoletto (Baritone, Sandford, Scotland)
 COC CREDITS: Renato, *A Masked Ball* (2014). RECENT: Rigoletto, *Rigoletto* (Michigan Opera
 Theatre); Scarpia, *Tosca* (Grange Park Opera); Conte di Luna, *Il Trovatore*; Golaud, *Pelléas et
 Mélisande* (Scottish Opera); Macbeth, *Macbeth* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); Ford, *Falstaff*
 (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden). UPCOMING: Renato, *A Masked Ball* (Grange Park Opera);
 Germont, *La Traviata* (Welsh National Opera).



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“I have in mind a subject that would be one of the greatest creations of the modern theatre if the police would only allow it.”

Giuseppe Verdi



RIGOLETTO AT A GLANCE

BY TAYLOR LONG

THE STORY IN A MINUTE

Rigoletto is desperate to hide his daughter, Gilda, from his lecherous employer, the Duke. However she has secretly fallen in love with the man (who has disguised himself as a student). After Gilda is violated in the Duke's court, Rigoletto vows revenge, but his daughter overhears his plans and sacrifices herself to save her lover.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“I have in mind a subject that would be one of the greatest creations of the modern theatre if the police would only allow it,” Verdi wrote in a letter to his trusted librettist, Francesco Maria Piave. He was referring to Victor Hugo's controversial five-act play, *Le roi s'amuse*, which served as the source material for *Rigoletto*.

Verdi's concerns about “the police” were well-founded, as some 20 years earlier, Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse* was shut down after only one performance by order of the government.

Verdi and Piave encountered similar difficulties with censorship in bringing this subject to operatic life, but Verdi was resolute in his approach to the material. In a letter to Carlo Marzari, the President of Teatro la Fenice, Verdi railed against proposed changes to the plot that would soften the character of the Duke: “The Duke must be an utter libertine; otherwise there is no reason why [Rigoletto] should be afraid to let his daughter out of concealment and therefore the drama is impossible... my music is not just written casually for any situation; I try to give it a character appropriate to the drama.”

INNOVATIVE MUSICAL STRUCTURE

“It is the piece where Verdi turned a corner in a major way and got rid of a lot of the old structure and old styles that opera had been fixed in,” says director Christopher Alden.

Structurally, the opera represents an evolution away from the standard two-part

cavatina (made up of a slow, lyrical section followed by an agile portion designed to highlight the singer's dramatic power) to the *arioso* form, which combines the flexibility of *recitative* (a conversational style that more closely mimics natural speech) with the deep expressive possibilities of a full-scale aria.

Act III's beloved quartet “Bella figlia dell'amore,” was similarly innovative for its time, in how it ingeniously retained the musical identities of the four characters—a departure from the unified grand *concerto finale*, prominent in earlier Italian operas of composers like Donizetti, Bellini, and Rossini.

MUSICAL SECRECY

In an effort to prevent his new melodies from being heard before *Rigoletto's* premiere, Verdi demanded utmost secrecy from his singers. It is rumoured that tenor Raffaele Mirate, who originated the role of the Duke, was given his music only a few days prior to the opening and that Verdi forbade him from even whistling the melody to “La donna è mobile,” arguably one of opera's most well-known arias, in which the musical charm belies a monstrous attitude towards women.

AN IMPRESSIVE CAST

Singing the part of Gilda is American soprano Anna Christy, who made her role debut in this very production when it was performed at English National Opera in 2014. You may remember Christy's last appearance at the COC in the 2012/2013 season when she shared a “brilliantly sung and presented” (*The Globe and Mail*) rendition of the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

With his “deeply impressive... attractive baritone” (*Toronto Star*), English baritone Roland Wood, last seen on the COC stage in 2014 as Renato in *A Masked Ball*, takes on one of the most challenging baritone roles as the court jester Rigoletto.

OVERWHELMING POPULARITY

Rigoletto is one of the 10 most popular operas of all time. In a recent annual survey, more than 900 companies worldwide performed Verdi's masterpiece, offering 2,285 opportunities to hear this timeless music in a given year.

Taylor Long is the COC's Advancement Communications Officer.

Lester Lynch (opposite page) was Rigoletto and (below) Simone Osborne his daughter Gilda, in the COC's 2011 production.



It's always a treat to welcome the warm and witty Stephen Lord back to the COC. This winter, he conducts our Rigoletto!

GET TO KNOW STEPHEN LORD



What would people be surprised to learn about you?

THAT I AM A COMPLETE AND TOTAL INTROVERT.

Who or what are your biggest inspirations, musically or personally?

My inspiration when I was a kid was Caruso. That voice! And for instruments, the incredible Artur Rubinstein, whom I heard in live performance quite often.

Who would play you in the movie about your life?

I fear it might be Boris Karloff!

If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would it be?

Although I love Toronto a whole lot, it would be London where I feel most at home for a big city. Other than that, at my home in Massachusetts with a cat on my lap.

Coffee or tea?

Coffee.

Appetizer or dessert?

Am I allowed to say both?

Read the book or see the movie?

Both. It doesn't matter what order, either.

Far left: Stephen working on a couple of paragraphs in his favourite hammock. Left: in the orchestra pit with Roberto Mauro (COC's Director, Music and Artistic Administration).



What's your biggest guilty pleasure?

Reading a book in my hammock at my home in Maine and falling asleep after two paragraphs.

Who are three people, alive or dead or fictional, that you would like to have dinner with?

Arturo Toscanini, Queen Elizabeth I, Charles Dickens.

If you could ask one composer any question, who and what would it be?

I would ask a group of modern opera composers why they often seem to be ignorant of how voices work.

Do you have any pre-performance rituals?

A two-hour nap after lunch.

Is there an opera you've never conducted but would like to? Which one?

Die Walküre because it is so visceral.

What's the best thing about being a conductor?

Being in the middle of sounds and sights I always dreamed about.

What's your favourite thing about Toronto?

The people, old and new friends, and a long and warm relationship with the COC.

What the most important thing people should know about *Rigoletto*?

It is the first opera of Verdi where the Verdi baritone emerges as a vocal type and is a completely fleshed out character dramatically and musically.

2018/2019 BEHIND THE SEASON Art | Craft | Opera

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018

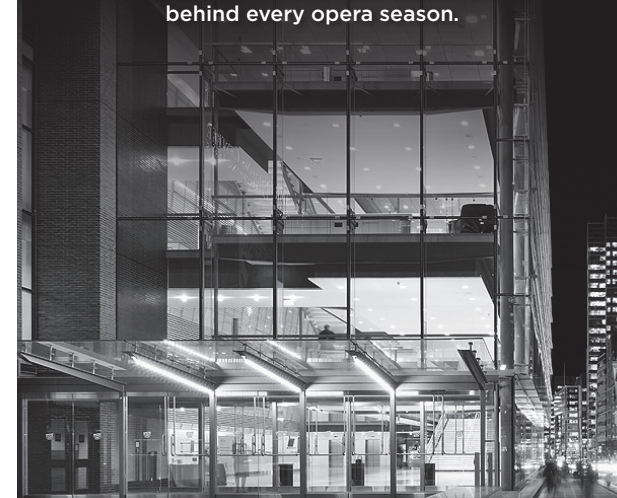
6:30 p.m. Doors open to the Four Seasons Centre

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7:30 p.m. Behind the Season presentation

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“I think what’s so exciting about Toronto is that it’s one of the few cities in the Western world today that is still growing and developing.”



Q&A WITH ALEXANDER NEEF

BY NIKITA GOURSKI

With a recently signed contract that will take his leadership through to the 2025/2026 season, General Director Alexander Neef is building on his first decade in Toronto by continuing to attract opera’s biggest names to the stage, investing in young artist training like never before, and advancing the conversation about the art form’s relevance and challenges in the 21st century.

NG: Looking back over the past decade, what are you most proud of?

AN: I think our biggest accomplishment has been to make the COC a major destination for the greatest operatic artists of our time. In a more specific way, we’ve created a very strong Canadian identity for the COC, not only as the biggest opera producer in the country, but a leader internationally. You can see this in our commitment to bringing great and established Canadian artists back to the company, like Gerald Finley, or forming more permanent relationships with them, like our Artist-in-Residence Jane Archibald

or the director Robert Carsen. We’ve also made this place a serious launching pad for young Canadian talent.

When you look ahead to the next 10 years, what’s the biggest challenge?

Well I think that not only for us, but for any arts organization in this country, the biggest challenge is to become relevant to a large number of people.

That has to do with access and financial barriers, but it’s much bigger than that. It’s about making a case for the centrality of art

to our society. Imagine if the vast majority of people really believed that art was inseparable from the health of our country—what would the arts and culture scene in Toronto look like?

Building a case for that is our responsibility, not just so that the COC can exist three generations from now, but because on a more fundamental, organizationally-agnostic level, I think that life without art is not worth living.

What’s the hardest thing about getting people to try opera?

It’s an art form that requires you to spend some money on a ticket, come downtown, and then be there for the larger part of an afternoon or an evening.

And after committing to that experience, you have to trust your own reactions, and overcome the fear of not understanding it, because opera is complex.

On the other hand, precisely because of what opera asks of you, I think it can create an emotional experience that is so much deeper and stronger than almost anything else out there. That’s the point of departure for me. I always like to think that if music causes you to have an emotional reaction, you should try opera.

How has Toronto changed in the time that you’ve been here?

The pace of growth is staggering. I think what’s so exciting about Toronto is that it’s one of the few cities in the Western world today that is still growing and developing. It’s a city of city-builders.

You’ve been rethinking how the company’s administrative headquarters (Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre at 227 Front St. E.) should interact with its surrounding community and we’ve seen some public programming animating that space, specifically an opera for young audiences, *The Magic Victrola*, presented last December.

We want that building to become much more open to the street and to the neighbourhood, and to start transforming into a public culture hub that serves and reflects that part of the city. Almost like a grass-roots branch of our operations.

Even though it wasn’t a mainstage performance with orchestra, our production of *The Magic Victrola* brought audiences much closer to experiencing what opera is actually about. And looking around at those performances, we had an audience that really reflected Toronto’s diversity and that’s what live theatre should be about—people from different parts of life spending time in a space, holding it together as a shared experience.

What’s surprised you the most these last 10 seasons?

How there’s always new potential that opens up for this company, but also for the art form. You never quite come to the end of it. You generate new possibilities and new opportunities through what you do—and I think that’s quite wonderful.

Nikita Gourski is the COC’s Strategic Advisor and Artistic Associate.

The genius of Stanley Kubrick and why Wi-Fi on airplanes is a bad idea—read more in the unedited version of this conversation, available online at coc.ca/Q&A.

THE ABDUCTION

FROM THE SERAGLIO

(DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL)

BY WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

A German *Singspiel* in three acts

Libretto by Christoph Friedrich Bretzner with adaptations by Gottlieb Stephanie.

Edited for the Neue Mozart Ausgabe by Gerhard Croll. Used by arrangement with European American Music Distributors Company, Canadian agent and U.S. agent for Baerenreiter-Verlag, publisher and copyright owner.

First performance: Vienna Burgtheater, July 16, 1782

NEW COC PRODUCTION

Co-production with Opéra de Lyon

February 7, 10, 13, 16, 18, 22, 24, 2018

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THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

(in order of vocal appearance)

Belmonte's Father/Bassa Selim
Raphael Weinstock[▷]

Belmonte
Mauro Peter[▷]

Konstanze
Jane Archibald

Pedrillo
Owen McCausland[^]

Blonde
Claire de Sévigné[^]

Osmin
Goran Jurić

Conductor
Johannes Debus

Director and additional
dialogues
Wajdi Mouawad[▷]

Revival Director
Valérie Nègre[▷]

Set Designer
Emmanuel Clolus[▷]

Costume Designer
Emmanuelle Thomas[▷]

Lighting Designer
Eric Champoux[▷]

Price Family Chorus Master
Sandra Horst[^]

Stage Manager
Stephanie Marrs

SURTITLES™ Producer
Gunta Dreifelds

PRODUCTION GENEROUSLY UNDERWRITTEN IN PART BY THE
HOWARD & SARAH D. SOLOMON FOUNDATION IN HONOUR OF GERARD MORTIER

Johannes Debus is generously underwritten by George & Kathy Dembroski

Wajdi Mouawad is generously sponsored by Robert Sherrin

Mauro Peter's performance is generously sponsored by Kristine Vikmanis & Denton Creighton

Jane Archibald's performance is generously sponsored by Jack Whiteside

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

[▷] COC mainstage debut [^] Graduate of the COC Ensemble Studio

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

Performance time is approximately three hours and 30 minutes, including one intermission.

PART I: 95 minutes **INTERMISSION 25 minutes** **PART II: 90 minutes**

Left: Jane Archibald (centre) starred in Wajdi Mouawad's production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio* when it premiered at Opéra de Lyon in 2016.

NOTES

If I have a unique perspective to bring to Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, it is the fact that I have been shaped equally by Eastern and Western culture, and, as a result, I'm incapable of condemning one civilization at the expense of the other.

It is not difficult to see that an 18th-century comedy about European women kidnapped by Turkish Muslims might appear, in 2018, as an exercise in caricature, or casual racism. Even more brutally, it could constitute an argument for the wholesale rejection of Islam and the East, thereby falling into larger patterns of Islamophobia in the West which would have us blame all our problems on the threat of an undifferentiated "Arabic" Other.

The challenge, then, is to enter an opera that was composed at a moment when European culture was held up as the ultimate source of truth, goodness, and beauty: Osmin is irredeemably appalling, on this view, because he is a Muslim. Bassa Selim is a "good Muslim," not because there are positive qualities in Islam, but because he has been elevated by the principles of the Enlightenment and his contact with European education. Everything that makes him barbaric and malicious, on the other hand, remains exclusively the provenance of his Muslim identity.

So when I agreed to direct this project, it was critical for me that I would be able to approach the text in a new way and see a different point of view on these issues. Because I'm a writer, I think through writing, and I have placed a great deal of importance on reworking the spoken dialogues in a way that honours the complexity of actual people rather than advancing untenable, and possibly dangerous, clichés.

Indeed, my first goal has been to take the individual situations and feelings of all the characters in this opera very seriously. Regardless of their gender, geography, or religion, all of them are capable of great love. They all fear that love might be withheld from them or that they will be misunderstood. And they are all in an impossible situation.

To go even deeper, however, I chose to ask myself the question of what happens "after." What happens once Belmonte, Konstanze, Blonde, and Pedrillo return to their homeland? How will they resume their lives after a period of captivity and separation that has so completely transformed their relationships?

To address this, we have created two narrative timelines: the present and the past. The present unfolds during a party in a ballroom celebrating Konstanze and Blonde's homecoming to Europe. The past is the characters' rendering of what they experienced in the East, as relived during the party. This effectively makes the opera a flashback and introduces a new dimension to everything that has happened, including the radical possibility that there is something worth loving in Bassa Selim's culture; that there might be a basis, in the East, for a freedom that challenges the dominance of Western masculinity; and that the women in this opera might represent the most enlightened characters of all.

Wajdi Mouawad
Director

Right: A scene from The Abduction from the Seraglio (Opera de Lyon, 2016).



SYNOPSIS

1. PROLOGUE: *The Turk's Head*

Belmonte's father gives a party* at his home in Vienna to celebrate the return of his son Belmonte, Konstanze, Pedrillo and Blonde from captivity. After extolling the virtues of Western Enlightenment, he invites his guests to play a game at the expense of "those appalling Mohammedans"—a fairground game called "Tête de turc" ("Turk's Head").

* By exploring the future beyond the end of the opera, we can see how the protagonists view their adventures in the East and their escape from the Bassa's harem (seraglio).

2. OVERTURE

The game does not appeal to either Konstanze or her maid, Blonde: "How can you strike someone you know?" The two years they spent in the seraglio have transformed them: the discovery of a culture, a human adventure. Konstanze asks Belmonte to tell the story of his trip, and she will tell hers.

ACT I

3. *Belmonte's arrival*

He arrived, destitute, in an unknown and threatening world. In front of the palace of Bassa Selim where he believes Konstanze is held captive, Belmonte expresses his anguish and his hope for her rescue.

4. *Osmin*

Osmin, the Bassa's overseer, although surly, confirms that this is indeed the Bassa's palace and that he detests Pedrillo.

5. *Osmin against Pedrillo*

At the party in Vienna, Blonde recalls Osmin's true love for her, and her own love for Pedrillo.

At the palace of Selim, Osmin, it seems, is a rival with Pedrillo for Blonde's love. Osmin threatens Pedrillo with terrible punishments.

6. *Reunion*

Belmonte finds his former servant, Pedrillo, who informs Belmonte that he, Blonde, and Konstanze were bought by the Bassa, and the Bassa has made Konstanze his favourite. The Bassa also offered Blonde to Osmin. "So many things have upset us since we have been here! Blonde and I were forced to convert—we have to pray five times a day, and have been initiated into a world that goes from right to left when we go from left to right! Everything is different, everything is surprising! And the hardest thing to recognize is that they are not as barbaric as we have always believed." Belmonte announces that he has a boat waiting which will take them all to safety. But before they can do that, they have to gain the confidence of the Bassa. Pedrillo suggests that he will present Belmonte as an architect, so that he can live in the palace. He also says that the Bassa will arrive soon with Konstanze.

7. *Concerns*

Alone, knowing that he will soon see Konstanze again, Belmonte worries. He hides, as the Bassa arrives.

8. *Selim's entrance*

The Bassa Selim enters accompanied by Konstanze and is greeted by his Janissaries (an elite military group of troops and bodyguards).

9. *Love does not diminish*

Selim sees the sadness of Konstanze. He knows that despite his power, he cannot force her heart. Konstanze tells him that it is her love for another and her pledge of fidelity that keeps her from reciprocating. Selim is torn between generosity and his

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jealousy. Konstanze leaves him some hope by suggesting that she may have an answer for him the next day.

10. An architect

At the party in Vienna, Konstanze tells Belmonte about the disquiet she felt when confronted by Selim's love and desire. The Turk's head also had a heart!

Pedrillo presents Belmonte to Selim as a great architect who can serve the Bassa. Selim accepts the proposal and welcomes him into his household.

11. Anguish

During the party, Konstanze explains her anxiety and past anguish to Belmonte. She asks him to accept her as a woman different from the one he once knew, and the freedom to be loved as she sees fit.

12. The Palace gates

Once Selim has left, Belmonte and Pedrillo try to enter the palace, but Osmin bars the way and threatens them. They outmaneuver him and enter.

ACT II

13. Blonde and her men

Blonde complains about her lovers, reminding them that it is through tenderness and love that you can conquer a woman's heart, not through orders and anger. Blonde and Pedrillo quarrel during the party. Osmin, she explains, was not a monster. "He aspired to greatness."

At the palace, Blonde and Osmin quarrel. He is no match for her and can only conclude that the English are too liberal with their women.

14. Friendship

Konstanze unburdens herself to Blonde, despairing that Belmonte has not rescued her. Blonde supports her with her energy

and her passion for freedom. "We once were mistress and servant; here we are two women, side by side."

15. Threats

Selim enters to once more press his case with Konstanze, who remains adamant. He demands that she love him tomorrow, threatening torture and even a slow and painful death. But Konstanze is not swayed.

INTERMISSION

16. Prayers

Selim, horrified by the threats he has just uttered, is called away by muezzin. The hour of prayer will give him back some sanity. Meanwhile, Pedrillo alerts Blonde of the arrival of Belmonte and the planned escape for the coming night and asks her to warn Konstanze.

17. Doubles

During the party, Pedrillo remembers having second thoughts about escaping. There, as here, you must serve a master, but there is the sun, here it rains. But in thinking of his friends, he overcomes his doubts and decides to confront his enemy—Osmin.

18. In vino veritas

Equipped with two bottles, Pedrillo manages to convince Osmin to drink with him. Osmin is quickly drunk, and Pedrillo manages to get rid of him.

19. Back to the beginning

Konstanze and Belmonte finally meet and embrace each other. They are joined by Blonde and Pedrillo. The two couples express their happiness, a moment clouded by suspicion from Belmonte and Pedrillo: have their beloveds been faithful? Konstanze is in tears and Blonde slaps Pedrillo, but they forgive and reconcile: "Long live love!"

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ACT III

20. The challenge of the truth

During the party, Blonde and Konstanze remember with regret their confused feelings for Osmin and Selim.

21. Love is my guide

Belmonte sings about the power of love.

22. Signal

In the middle of the night, Belmonte and Pedrillo are ready. They give the agreed-upon signal—the music of a mandolin and Pedrillo hums a romantic tune. The two women appear at the window, a ladder is placed, and Konstanze and Blonde descend.

23. One step too far

While all are preparing to flee, they are stopped by Osmin and his janissaries. Belmonte tries to bribe him with a purse full of ducats, a gesture that Osmin refuses with indignation. He orders the two couples be taken before the Bassa. Then, alone, he is triumphant.

24. A man without pity

The fugitives must explain themselves before the Bassa. Belmonte demands Selim's

largesse and proposes that his family, one of the richest in Spain, pay a ransom for their freedom. When he mentions his family's name—Lostados, son of the governor of Oran—Selim declares that Belmonte's father Lostados is his worst enemy, the man who heartlessly took everything away from Selim by stealing away the only woman he ever loved, Maria Magdalena de Heredia, Belmonte's mother. Selim orders that the execution be prepared, despite Osmin's plea for mercy: Blonde is pregnant, the baby she carries is innocent.

25. Adieux

Konstanze and Belmonte say their goodbyes, happy to die together.

26. The clemency

Selim finally grants his pardons, not wanting to resemble Belmonte's ruthless father and to teach the Europeans a lesson in forbearance. Osmin, hopeless, sees the one he loves depart in joy. All sing to the goodness, greatness, and nobility of Selim.

Wajdi Mouawad
Director

CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

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

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Csaba Koczó, *Assistant Principal*
James Aylesworth (leave of absence)
Terri Croft*
Elizabeth Johnston
Hiroko Kagawa*
Yakov Lerner
Aya Miyagawa
Louise Tardif
Marianne Urke (leave of absence)
Joanna Zabrowarna

VIOLA

Keith Hamm, *Principal*
Joshua Greenlaw, *Assistant Principal*
Carolyn Blackwell*
Catherine Gray
Sheila Jaffé
Beverley Spotton
Yosef Tamir (leave of absence)

CELLO

Bryan Epperson, *Principal*
Alastair Eng, *Associate Principal* (leave of absence)
Paul Widner, *Assistant Principal*
Daniel Wachsmuth, *Acting Assistant Principal**
Maurizio Baccante
Olga Laktionova
Elaine Thompson

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Robert Speer, *Assistant Principal*
Tom Hazlitt
Paul Langley

FLUTE

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Leslie Newman*

PICCOLO

Maria Pelletier*

OBOE

Mark Rogers, *Principal*
Lesley Young

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Dominic Desautels, *Acting Principal**
Colleen Cook

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Eric Hall, *Principal*
Lisa Chisolm

HORN

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Gary Pattison

TRUMPET

Robert Weymouth, *Principal*
Michael Fedyshyn*

TIMPANI

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Margaret Evans
Alexandra Lennox-Pomeroy
Eve Rachel McLeod
Jennifer Robinson
Teresa van der Hoeven

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Sandra Boyes
Wendy Hatala Foley
Lilian Kilianski
Laura McAlpine
Anne McWatt
Karen Olinyk

TENORS

Stephen Bell
Taras Chmil
Stephen Erickson
William Ford
Stephen McClare
Eric Olsen

BARITONES/BASSES

Bruno Cormier
Michael Downie
Jason Nedecky
Michael Sproule
Jan Vaculik
Michael York

A scene from *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (*Opera de Lyon, 2016*).



BIOGRAPHIES:

THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO



JANE ARCHIBALD, Konstanze (Soprano, Truro, NS)
COC CREDITS: Zdenka, *Arabella* (2017); Ginevra, *Ariodante* (2016); Susanna, *The Marriage of Figaro* (2016); Donna Anna, *Don Giovanni* (2015). RECENT: Adele, *Die Fledermaus* (Santa Fe Opera); Donna Anna, *Don Giovanni* (Theater an der Wien); Cunegonde, *Candide* (Musik Fest Hamburg). UPCOMING: Armida, *Rinaldo* (The English Concert Tour); Nightingale, *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (COC).



ERIC CHAMPOUX, Lighting Designer (Montreal, QC)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: *Crystal* and *OVO* (Cirque du Soleil); *The Magic Flute* (Pacific Opera Victoria); *Princess of Circus* (Musical Theater Of Moscow); *Aida* and *Falstaff* (L'Opéra de Montréal); *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Opéra de Lyon). UPCOMING: *Rinaldo* (Pacific Opera Victoria); *Roméo et Juliette* (L'Opéra de Montréal).



EMMANUEL CLOLUS, Set Designer (France)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: *Phèdre* (Festival Palazzetto Bru Zane à Paris and Théâtre de Caen); *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Opéra de Lyon); *La Vestale* (La Monnaie/De Munt)



CLAIRE DE SÉVIGNÉ, Blonde (Soprano, Hudson, QC)
SELECT COC CREDITS: The Fiakermilli, *Arabella* (2017); First Niece, *Peter Grimes* (2013). RECENT: Blonde, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Savonlinna Opera Festival/Opernhaus Zürich); Le Feu/La Princesse/Le Rossignol, *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* (Internationale Opernstudio, Zurich); Hermione, *Orest* (Opernhaus Zürich); Queen of the Night, *The Magic Flute* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis). UPCOMING: *Claire de Sévigné in Concert* (Niagara Symphony Orchestra and Edmonton Symphony Orchestra).



JOHANNES DEBUS, COC Music Director (Berlin, Germany/Toronto, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: *Louis Riel*, *Götterdämmerung* (2017); *Ariodante*, *Siegfried* and *The Marriage of Figaro* (2016). RECENT: *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Salome* (Metropolitan Opera); *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Bregenz Festival); *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Oper Frankfurt); *The Marriage of Figaro* (Komische Oper Berlin); Engagements with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Houston Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, Aspen Music Festival, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Oregon Symphony and Seattle Symphony. UPCOMING: *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (COC).



DIONYSIS GRAMMENOS, Assistant Conductor (Athens, Greece)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: (as music director) Inaugural Concert (Greek Youth Symphony Orchestra), *The Flying Dutchman* (Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra); *L'Isola disabitata* (Vienna Young Philharmonic Orchestra). UPCOMING: Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra debut.



SANDRA HORST, Price Family Chorus Master Chair (Toronto, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: *Louis Riel*, *Tosca*, *The Magic Flute*, *Götterdämmerung* (2017); *Ariodante* (2016); *Norma* (2016, 1998). RECENT: Conductor, *Prima Zombie: The Diva that just wouldn't stay dead* (UoFT Opera). UPCOMING: *Rigoletto*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*; *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*, *Anna Bolena* (COC); *Vengeance* and *Of Thee I Sing* (UoFT Opera). ADDITIONAL: Director of Musical Studies at University of Toronto Opera.



GORAN JURIĆ, Osmin (Bass, Karlovac, Croatia)
COC CREDITS: Sarastro, *The Magic Flute* (2017). RECENT: Brander, *The Damnation of Faust* (Teatro dell'Opera di Roma); Priest, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Bayerische Staatsoper; Münchner Opernfestspiele); Sarastro, *The Magic Flute*; Colline, *La Bohème* (Opera di Firenze); Mosè, *Mosè in Egitto* (Bregenz Festival). UPCOMING: Priest, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Teatro di San Carlo).



STEPHANIE MARRS, Stage Manager (Toronto, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: *Louis Riel*, *The Magic Flute* (2017); *Ariodante*; *Carmen* (2016); *La Traviata* (2015); *Madama Butterfly* (2014); *Hercules* (2013); Assistant Stage Manager, *Arabella* (2017), *Siegfried* (2016). RECENT: *Tapestry Briefs: Winter Shorts* (Tapestry Opera); 7Sould presents *Underneath* (The Beaches Jazz Festival); *Apocalypse* (Luminato Festival); Panamania (Pan Am Games 2015 Arts and Culture Festival). UPCOMING: *Anna Bolena* (COC).



OWEN MCCAUSLAND, Pedrillo (Tenor, Saint John, NB)
COC CREDITS: Tamino, *The Magic Flute* (2017); Lurcanio, *Ariodante* (2016); Testo, *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (2015); Don Juan, *Don Quichotte* (2014); Lord Cecil, *Roberto Devereux* (2014). RECENT: Tenor soloist, *Musik für das Ende* (Soundstreams Canada); Lord Arturo Bucklaw, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Pacific Opera Victoria). UPCOMING: The Fisherman, *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* (COC)



WAJDI MOUAWAD, Director (Deir al-Qamar, Lebanon)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: Director, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Opéra de Lyon); Writer/Director, *Tous des Oiseaux* (La Colline - théâtre national). UPCOMING: Writer/Director, *Victoires* (La Colline - théâtre national). ADDITIONAL: Director of Théâtre national de la Colline; Officer of the Order of Canada (2009); Chevalier de l'Ordre National des Arts et des Lettres de France (2002); Governor General Award-winning playwright for *Inflammation du verbe vivre* (2016).



VALÉRIE NÈGRE, Revival Director (Paris, France)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: (as Assistant Director) *Tous des oiseaux* (La Colline); *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (Théâtre des Champs Elysées); *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Opéra de Lyon).



MAURO PETER, Belmonte (Tenor, Lucerne, Switzerland)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: Tamino, *The Magic Flute* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden); Belmonte, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Teatro alla Scala); Andres, *Wozzeck* (Salzburg Festival); Don Ottavio, *Don Giovanni*; Medoro, *Orlando paladino* (Opernhaus Zürich); Ferrando, *Così fan tutte* (Bayerische Staatsoper). UPCOMING: Tamino, *The Magic Flute* (Salzburg Festival and Nationaltheater Mannheim).



EMMANUELLE THOMAS, Costume Designer (Chambéry, France)
COC DEBUT. SELECT: *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (Opéra de Lyon); *Tous des oiseaux* (La Colline); *Haute surveillance* (Le Bateau Feu); *Macbeth* (Palais du Littoral); *Psychose 4.48* (La Loge); *Richard II* (Théâtre de l'Archipel); *Sœurs* and *Des Mourants* (Le Grand T).



RAPHAEL WEINSTOCK, Bassa Selim (Actor, Haifa, Israel)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: David, *Tout des Oiseaux* (La Colline - théâtre national); *The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey* (Cameri Theatre); Benedict, *Much Ado About Nothing* (Ramat Gan Theatre); Orlando, *As You Like It* (Be'er Sheva Municipal Theatre); Jesus, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Theater Basel); Dorian Gray, *Dorian Gray* (Statini Opera).

“AN ACTUAL HUMAN BEING”

JANE ARCHIBALD TALKS ABOUT KONSTANZE AND WORKING WITH WAJDI MOUAWAD

BY CATHERINE KUSTANCZY



Jane Archibald was initially nervous about performing in Wajdi Mouawad's production of *The Abduction From The Seraglio* (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) during its first staging at Opéra de Lyon in 2016. Theatre directors, while meaning well, can often make demands on singers that aren't technically feasible, and with no experience in opera, approach productions with what she calls "a great many opinions" on revolutionizing the art form. Working with the Lebanese-Canadian theatre artist, however, she experienced an open exchange of ideas and respect for music.

At the start of production, Archibald says the director "sent out a wonderful long introductory letter, with an almost-essay on his feelings about the piece and what he wanted to do. He had really thought about it—it wasn't, "opera is easy; I'll throw it together!" It was, "I've thought about this; this is what I think about the women and characters and their development." That was automatically a lot more interesting."

Mozart's 1782 opera, which revolves around the hero Belmonte (Mauro Peter) rescuing his love Konstanze (Archibald) from the seraglio of Bassa Selim (Raphael Weinstock), with help from his servant Pedrillo (Owen McCausland). The work went through several re-writes in its original iteration, with the initial libretto by Christoph Friedrich Bretzner adjusted and adapted by Gottlieb Stephanie; Stephanie, whom Mozart had lobbied for an opera commission, was the inspector of the Nationalsingspiel,

a company set up by Austrian Emperor Joseph II to promote German language works. Mozart, together with Stephanie, made changes to Bretzner's original libretto, ones that the composer felt greatly aided the work's musical and theatrical impacts.

The work features a Eurocentric orientalism that presents challenges for 21st-century audiences and artists. When asked about a work considered to be firmly rooted in its time, Archibald is quick to respond. "Are there many operas that aren't? They are all a product of their time but it's more overt (in *Seraglio*). Wajdi addresses it head on."

Mouawad added his own original dialogue into the work in French; it was translated into German by dramaturge and translator Uli Menke. "The text is complex and full of layers," Archibald notes, "but we come off thinking in a higher way. Things are not black and white."

This *Seraglio* is notable, the soprano says, for the opportunity it presents for conversation. "We are saying, wait a minute, nobody's all bad or all good." She adds that Mouawad approached *Seraglio* "very much through a feminist lens."

The character of Konstanze, usually presented as simpering, is here allowed to be what Archibald terms "an actual human being. When I get to speak that kind of text and have that exchange (with Belmonte) onstage, my arias are different—we understand the emotion behind them in a deeper way."

The celebrated director Wajdi Mouawad is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, and is known for politically charged themes throughout his plays, novels and directorial endeavors. His work brims with ideas around loss, betrayal, and struggle. In 2000, Mouawad received the Governor General's Award for Literature in Drama, and in 2009, was made an Officer of the Order of Canada. His award-winning 2003 work *Incendies* (*Scorched*) has been produced around the world, with the subsequent film version, directed by Denis Villeneuve, being Canada's official selection for the 2011 Academy Awards.



“We are saying, wait a minute, nobody’s all bad or all good.”

Mouawad’s Konstanze holds more nuanced views, ones Archibald has clearly thought a good deal about, having performed in the original production in Lyon. “For Konstanze, it’s a case of, ‘I can’t hate these people; I’ve lived with them in captivity. I don’t want to play this racist game; I’ve changed and I can’t be the same person I was before I was taken. Love me for me. If we are to have any hope of resuming this relationship, you can’t say, okay, go back to being a vapid, noble young woman who is going to enter society and continue with shallow ways—I’ve had this experience, and it’s changed me.’ It’s nice to have a chance to play her in this way and not just, ‘oh, woe is me!’ It elevates the story and makes the rest of it worthy of Mozart’s music.”

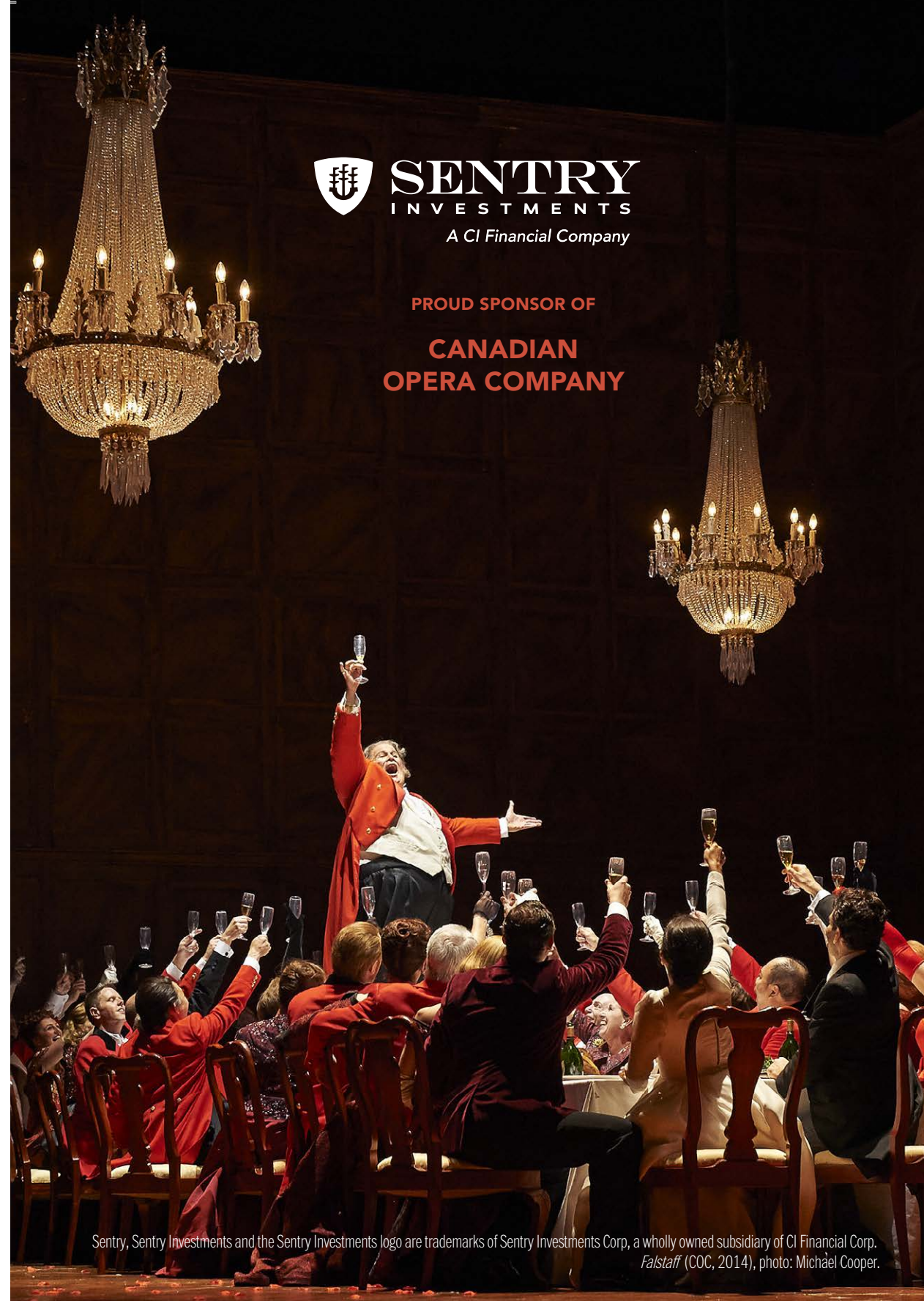
While known for performing the roles of both Konstanze (in *Seraglio*) and the Queen Of The Night (in *The Magic Flute*), Archibald, who is the Canadian Opera Company’s first Artist-in-Residence (for the 2017/2018 season), has expanded her repertoire and performs Donna Anna (from *Don Giovanni*) and Susanna (from *The Marriage Of Figaro*), and looks forward to doing more *bel canto* roles, as well as being back on stage in Toronto regularly. Having

performed the role of Ginevra last season in Handel’s *Ariodante*, she was on the stage of the Four Seasons Centre this past fall, as Zdenka in Strauss’ *Arabella*. In the spring, she’ll be the titular Nightingale in the COC revival of Stravinsky’s *The Nightingale And Other Short Fables*.

“It’s sort of a long-term goal,” Archibald says of performing the great works. “All the *bel canto* repertoire requires coloratura facility. I’ve done *Lucia* and *Sonnambula*, so you know, everything comes incrementally and slowly, and that’s all right.”

Catherine Kustanczy is a freelance arts journalist with a speciality in classical coverage, and has had work published in the Toronto Star, the National Post, Opera News and Opera Canada magazines.

On February 20, Jane will be performing a recital as part of the COC’s Free Concert Series. With Liz Upchurch at the piano, the program is titled *Vienna to Paris* and includes music by Franz Schubert. For details, visit coc.ca/FreeConcerts



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BACKSTAGE AND BEYOND!

Here is a look at some of our recent activities, many shared with our wonderful COC donors, including parties, galas, and backstage meet-and-greets with artists.



[1] Proving that this stage was made for selfies, new COC Board Chair Justin Linden poses with guests at the company’s annual gala—Centre Stage—in celebration of Canada’s emerging opera talent. And backstage **[2]** the winners celebrated: Ensemble Studio Competition Second Prize winner Joel Allison, First Prize and Audience Choice Award winner Simona Genga, and Third Prize winner Anna-Sophie Neher.

[3] The Spotlight Series offers Friends members and other company supporters unique performances and audience-centric events, including this special concert with Ensemble Studio artists Stéphane

Mayer (pianist), Samantha Pickett (soprano), Simone McIntosh (mezzo) and Megan Quick (mezzo), who performed arias and ensembles requested by the attendees.

[4] Back when the leaves were turning gold, President’s Council and Opera Club member Christopher Bozak and Opera Club member Sadhisha Ambagahawita feted the company’s season opening.

[5] Guests of the Season Opening Party were among the first to hear the company’s new Ensemble Studio artists and enjoy a surprise performance by Artist-in-Residence Jane Archibald.

[6] Supporting incomparable artistry: Jane Archibald with her sponsor and COC Board Member Jack Whiteside at the opening night of *Arabella*, a production that received unanimous praise and a shout-out in the *New York Times*’ “Best Classical Music Performances of 2017.”

[7] Opera Club is a membership program specifically tailored for young arts supporters. The homegrown star of *The Elixir of Love*, soprano Simone Osborne (second from left) mingled with OC Committee members Alia Rosenstock, Lauren Di Pede (Opera Club co-chair), and Diana Goodwin.

[8] Pictured here are some of the amazing staff and artists who came out to run, walk, and cheer for the 2017 Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon.

[9] Holiday traditions: General Director Alexander Neef and COC Board Member Colleen Sexsmith play piano four-hands to lead party-goers through a songbook of seasonal carols, while **[10]** soprano Adrienne Pieczonka lent her voice to the festivities.

[11] Alex Josephson, co-founder of Toronto-based architecture firm PARTISANS and a Committee member of Opera Club, chats with guests at the COC’s Cocktails and Carols party.

From passion to production



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ALL THE MAGIC!

Last fall, the COC initiated a new performance program, Opera for Young Audiences. The first production, *The Magic Victrola*, ran from Nov. 29 to Dec. 3 at the COC's Imperial Oil Opera Theatre (227 Front St. E.), entertaining and delighting both the young and the young at heart.

The one-act opera featured popular excerpts by Bizet, Delibes, Donizetti, Mozart, Offenbach, and Puccini with a libretto by David Kersnar and Jacqueline Russell, and was performed by COC Ensemble Studio artists, with Ensemble graduate



tenor Andrew Haji, fresh from his mainstage *Elixir of Love* triumph. Pre-performance activities were supplemented by an interactive

opera creation workshop led by composer and artist-educator Chris Thornborrow.

Keep up to date with all the COC's programs for young people at learn.coc.ca.

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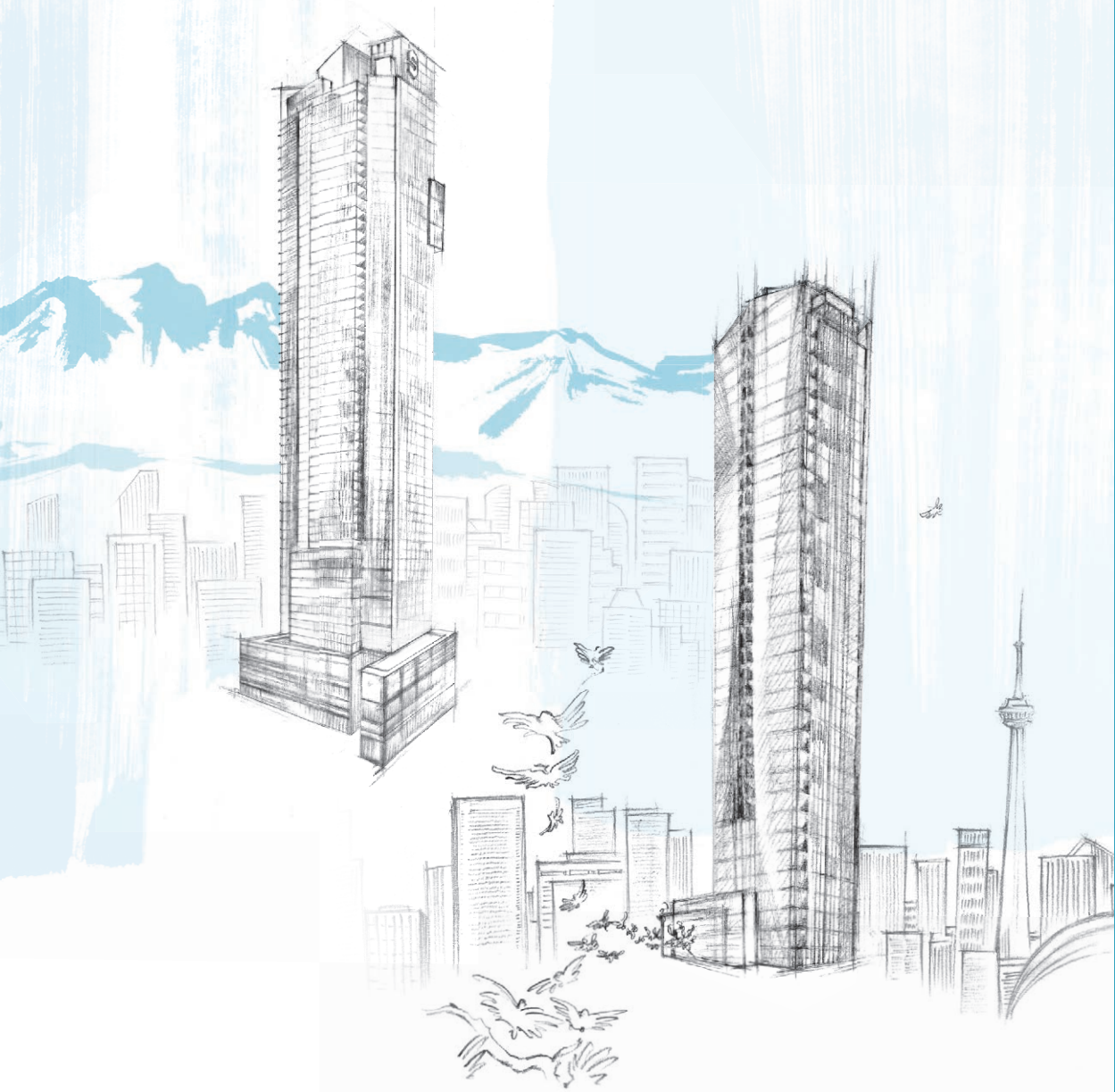
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Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre

Join head of the COC Ensemble Studio **Liz Upchurch**, Ensemble Studio singers **Samuel Chan** and **Bruno Roy**, and Ensemble Studio alumnus **Neil Craighead** as they explore the baritone voice in all its fascinating facets.

MOZART'S STYLE: THE ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO

Thursday, February 8, 2018 - 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Education Centre

Explore Mozart's first big opera hit with musicologists **Catherine Willshire** and **Matthew Timmermans**. Includes an intimate performance by COC Orchestra violinists **Elizabeth Johnston** and **Sandra Baron**.

OPERA TRIVIA: BEGINNER TO EXPERT

Thursday, February 15, 2018 - 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Education Centre

Join trivia master **Russel Harder** of *Trivia Club!* for this fun, gameshow-inspired opera quiz night. You don't need to be an expert! Come solo or as a team.

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Winter programming includes solo recitals by **Joshua Guerrero**, tenor (Jan 23); **Claire de Sévigné**, soprano (Feb 14); **Jane Archibald**, soprano (Feb 20); **Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio** (Jan 25, Feb 8, Feb 15, March 15); and **Artists of the COC Orchestra and Orchestra Academy** (Jan 25).

For complete listings, and to sign up for e-mail updates, visit

coc.ca/FreeConcerts



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PATRON INFORMATION AND POLICIES

GO SCENT FREE

In consideration of patrons with allergies, please avoid wearing perfumed beauty products and fragrances.

COAT AND PARCEL CHECK

To uphold the safety of the building, oversized bags and parcels may be prohibited from entering R. Fraser Elliott Hall. Patrons attending COC performances may be offered complimentary parcel check. Coat check is located in the Lower Lobby, where the following services are also available: booster seats, back supports, infrared hearing-assistive devices and rental of binoculars, on a first-come, first-served basis.

NOISE 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. 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. The design and direction of the production is restricted under intellectual property law. Any person using an unauthorized recording device will be required to surrender or erase any recordings, photographic or digital images and may be asked to leave. No refunds will be

issued. Be sure to take a look at our Facebook page for official photos of our productions!

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.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Outside food and beverages are prohibited from entering the Four Seasons Centre. Food and beverages are not allowed in the auditorium.

RECORDINGS

Patrons consent to appear in recorded material by attending FSC performances/events.

OBJECTIONABLE BEHAVIOUR

Management reserves the right to refuse admission without refund, and expel from the premises, any person whose presence or conduct is deemed objectionable.

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.

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, please e-mail lostandfound@coc.ca or call **416-342-5200** for information.

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 include backstage access! For more information, visit fourseasonscentre.ca.

PRE-PERFORMANCE OPERA CHATS

COC Education and Outreach staff and guest speakers offer free, insightful chats about the stories, music and background of all COC productions, 45 minutes prior to each performance in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. Doors open one hour before each performance. Seating is limited and available on a first-come, first served basis. Please join the line-up early to avoid disappointment.

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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 **416-342-5233**.

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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
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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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We are pleased to offer, for the convenience of all our patrons, a pre-order system for intermission purchases. Our pre-order system is designed to decrease your wait time at the bar during intermission and we invite you to make use of it at every COC performance. Bars are located throughout the Isadore and Rosalie Sharp City Room's many levels. Food and beverages are not permitted in R. Fraser Elliott Hall.

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