

For immediate release: April 30, 2018

AN EVENING WITH THE ENSEMBLE STUDIO PUTS FRESH OPERA VOICES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Toronto – Some of Canada’s most impressive young voices will take over the mainstage of the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts on **May 25, 2018** for *An Evening with the Ensemble Studio*. That night, artists of the **Canadian Opera Company**’s prestigious training program for young opera professionals will join together for a one-night-only performance, featuring scenes from Mozart’s satirical look at love and fidelity, *Così fan tutte*, and a concert staging of Purcell’s supernatural epic, *Dido and Aeneas*.

For more than 35 years, the **COC Ensemble Studio** has helped launch the careers of over 230 Canadian artists, many of whom have gone on to enjoy international acclaim; *An Evening with the Ensemble Studio* is a chance to hear these young talents at the start of it all. With tickets costing just **\$35** for any seat in the theatre, it’s an excellent opportunity for audience members to enjoy premium seating at an accessible price.

All nine artists of the Ensemble Studio will perform in *An Evening with the Ensemble Studio*. Sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* will be sung by soprano **Samantha Pickett**, praised for her “impressive agility” (*Schmopera*), and mezzo-soprano **Simone McIntosh**, who has been heralded for her “big, beautiful, gleaming high-mezzo” (*Ludwig van Toronto*). The pair also appears as First Witch and Second Witch, respectively, in *Dido and Aeneas*. The role of the suitor Guglielmo will be sung by baritone **Samuel Chan**, who later returns as a sailor in *Dido and Aeneas*; **Chan** has been praised for his “fresh, youthful voice” (*Ludwig van Toronto*).

Così fan tutte’s Don Alfonso will be sung by baritone **Bruno Roy** who returns for *Dido and Aeneas* in the title role of Aeneas. He sings opposite the “seductive rich” (*Toronto Star*) voice of soprano **Lauren Eberwein**, cast as Dido.

Soprano **Danika Lorèn**, who was recently described by *Opera Canada* as “bright-voiced and exquisite” for her work in the COC’s current production of *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*, sings Despina in *Così fan tutte*, as well as Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*.

Mezzo-soprano **Megan Quick**, recently praised for the “opulence and richness of her voice” (*Ludwig van Toronto*) is the Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas*.

Ensemble Studio graduate, tenor **Andrew Haji** rounds out the cast as Ferrando in scenes from *Così fan tutte*, reprising his role from the 2014 Ensemble Studio performance to which he brought a “honeyed sound and heart” (*NOW*).

Singers will be accompanied by the acclaimed COC Orchestra, led by COC Music Director **Johannes Debus**. Ensemble Studio intern coaches and pianists **Rachael Kerr** and **Stéphane Mayer** will play the harpsichord.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE STUDIO

The COC Ensemble Studio is Canada’s premier training program for young opera professionals. Since the inception of the program in 1980, over 230 young professional Canadian singers, opera coaches, stage directors and conductors have acquired their first major professional operatic experience through the Ensemble Studio. Former members include Ben Heppner, Isabel Bayrakdarian, John Fanning, Wendy Nielsen, Joseph Kaiser, David Pomeroy, Allyson McHardy, and Krisztina Szabó.

The members of the Ensemble Studio are the COC’s resident artists and important ambassadors for the company. They receive a blend of advanced study and practical experience through an individually tailored, multi-year

program, involving understudying and performing mainstage roles, intensive vocal coaching, language and acting studies, and career skills development, as well as participation in masterclasses with internationally renowned opera professionals.

TICKET INFORMATION

All tickets for *An Evening with the Ensemble Studio* are **\$35** and may be purchased online at coc.ca, by calling **COC Ticket Services at 416-363-8231**, or in person at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts Box Office**, located at 145 Queen St. W., Monday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Standing Room tickets are available for **\$12** at 11 a.m. the morning of the performance, in person only at the **Four Seasons Centre Box Office**. Standing room tickets are limited to two tickets per person and subject to availability.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An Evening with the Ensemble Studio is generously underwritten in part by **Marjorie and Roy Linden**.

The COC Ensemble Studio, underwritten in part by Peter M. Deeb, Marjorie and Roy Linden, Sheila K. Piercey, RBC Foundation and The Slight Family Foundation, is Canada's premier training program for young opera professionals and provides advanced instruction, hands-on experience, and career development opportunities. The Ensemble Studio is also supported by the Government of Canada, the Hal Jackman Foundation and other generous donors.

ABOUT THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience support-base and one of the highest attendance and subscription rates in North America. Under its leadership team of General Director Alexander Neef and Music Director Johannes Debus, the COC is increasingly capturing the opera world's attention. The COC maintains its international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation by creating new productions within its diverse repertoire, collaborating with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracting the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The COC performs in its own opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. For more information on the COC, visit coc.ca.

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For more information or to request photographs of Ensemble Studio artists, please contact:

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