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## **SUPERSTAR SOPRANO SONDRA RADVANOVSKY REIGNS IN ANNA BOLENA AT THE COC**

**Toronto** – Opera’s reigning queen of *bel canto*, Canadian-American soprano **Sondra Radvanovsky**, returns to the **Canadian Opera Company** this spring to close its 2017/2018 season with Donizetti’s Tudor drama, *Anna Bolena*. Last performed at the COC in 1984, the opera captures the tumultuous final days of Henry VIII’s second wife, Anne Boleyn, as she fights for her honour and her life. *Anna Bolena* runs for nine performances on **April 28, May 3, 5, 8, 11, 16, 20, 24, 26, 2018**.

With this sumptuous new production from acclaimed British director **Stephen Lawless**, the COC completes its Donizetti Tudor Trilogy, which began with *Maria Stuarda* in 2010 and continued with *Roberto Devereux* in 2014, where **Radvanovsky** earned raves for her portrayal of Elisabetta. Queen Elizabeth I is a common presence across all three works; **Lawless** and his team made sure she was not only seen on stage but felt through the many Elizabethan references that include set design inspired by Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre and lavish period costumes that were popular during her reign.

*Anna Bolena* is a showpiece for an extraordinary soprano. In fact, despite the enduring cultural fascination with the queen’s untimely end and the opera’s immediate popularity upon its premiere, it was rarely performed in the early 20th century due to the difficulty of casting the vocally demanding title role. Having mastered the *bel canto* repertoire, **Radvanovsky** returns to the COC as Anna Bolena on the heels of her much-heralded portrayal all three Donizetti queens in a single season at the Metropolitan Opera. *The New York Times* praised her “wondrous command of subtle shadings and vibrato. Making every word matter, she infuses each phrase with urgency and emotion. In bursts of defiance, she can unleash her voice with thrilling power, slicing through the orchestra and chorus with silvery top notes.”

**Radvanovsky** is joined by an all-star cast. American soprano **Keri Alkema** lends her voice, with its “appealing brew of dark and creamy colors” (*New York Times*), to the role of Giovanna Seymour, while American bass-baritone **Christian Van Horn**, winner of the 2018 Richard Tucker Award, makes his role debut as Enrico VIII. American **Bruce Sledge**, one of the world’s most in-demand *bel canto* tenors, is Lord Riccardo Percy, and Canadian mezzo-soprano and Ensemble Studio graduate **Allyson McHardy**, who has been described as having a spellbinding presence that is radiant and noble, sings the role of Smeton, the musician secretly in love with the queen.

Considered Donizetti’s first major hit, *Anna Bolena* is known for its dramatic arias and ensembles. Italian maestro **Corrado Rovaris** leads the COC Orchestra and Chorus through the exquisite score, rich in emotion. The opera is sung in Italian and presented by the COC with English SURTITLES™.

### **CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM**

<b>Anna Bolena</b>	Sondra Radvanovsky
<b>Enrico VIII</b>	Christian Van Horn
<b>Giovanna Seymour</b>	Keri Alkema
<b>Lord Rochefort</b>	Thomas Goerz
<b>Lord Riccardo Percy</b>	Bruce Sledge
<b>Smeton</b>	Allyson McHardy

<b>Sir Hervey</b>	Jonathan Johnson
<b>Conductor</b>	Corrado Rovaris
<b>Director</b>	Stephen Lawless
<b>Set Designer</b>	Benoît Dugardyn
<b>Costume Designer</b>	Ingeborg Bernerth
<b>Revival Lighting Designer</b>	Reinhard Traub
<b>Original Lighting Designer</b>	Mark McCullough

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Single tickets for *Anna Bolena* range from **\$35 – \$225** and box seats, when available, are **\$350**. Tickets are now on sale, available online at [coc.ca](http://coc.ca), by calling **416-363-8231**, or in person at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts Box Office** (145 Queen St. W.). For more information on **specially priced tickets** available to **young people under the age of 15, standing room, Opera Under 30** presented by **TD Bank Group, student groups** and **rush seating**, visit [coc.ca](http://coc.ca).

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**CIBC:** Production Sponsor

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**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. Designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects, the Four Seasons Centre opened in 2006. For more information on the COC, visit [coc.ca](http://coc.ca).

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