THE NIGHTINGALE AND OTHER SHORT FABLES

ANNA BOLENA

PROGRAM SPRING 2018

#COCNightingale #COCBolena
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GO SCENT FREE. In consideration of patrons with allergies, please avoid using perfumed beauty products and fragrances.

Front cover: puppets from The Nightingale emerge from storage for this spring’s production.
A MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL DIRECTOR
ALEXANDER NEEF

One of the most compelling things about opera is how truly vast and wide-ranging the art form is. As General Director of the COC, my hope is that every season we program illuminates another aspect of opera’s extraordinary breadth.

Indeed, it’s an art form that can include Stravinsky’s *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*—an assortment of intimately drawn musical vignettes by a 20th-century Russian composer. Yet it’s also an art form equally itself in Donizetti’s *Anna Bolena*, a high-wire act of bel canto singing set in the court of Henry VIII.

Opera can mean an orchestra pit flooded with 62,000 litres of water and the simple enchantment of shadows and light, or a stunning set modelled on Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, in which a drama of royal jealousies plays out.

In our upcoming 2018/2019 season (p. 34), you’ll discover works like Tchaikovsky’s romantic *Eugene Onegin* (seen and heard for the first time in Toronto in Robert Carsen’s celebrated production); the world premiere of Rufus Wainwright’s *Hadrian*, featuring the company debuts of international stars Thomas Hampson and Karita Mattila; the return of Christine Goerke, performing the title role in Richard Strauss’ riveting family psychodrama, *Elektra*; Mozart’s ingenious comedy of fidelity and temptation, *Così fan tutte*, conducted by Bernard Labadie; one of opera’s greatest love stories, and one of the COC’s most popular productions, *La Bohème*; and Verdi’s late-career masterpiece, *Otello*, presented with an incomparable cast led by Russell Thomas, Gerald Finley, and Tamara Wilson.

It’s a season that transports us from Ancient Rome to bohemian garrets in 19th-century Paris, from Greek mythology to Russian country estates. It includes modernist orchestration of great complexity, as well as straightforward accompaniment for singers to demonstrate the agility and athleticism of their vocal technique.

Playwright and *Hadrian* librettist Daniel MacIvor—himself a relative newcomer to the art form—crystallized this experience of opera’s capacity to contain multitudes with a pointed remark: “saying ‘I don’t like opera’ is the same as saying ‘I don’t like books.’”

The true richness and depth of opera means there is always more to encounter and more to discover about what this art form can be and how it can challenge our expectations with every performance.
THE NIGHTINGALE

AND OTHER SHORT FABLES

BY IGOR STRAVINSKY

Ragtime (1918)
Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet: No. 1 (1919)
Pribaoutki (1914)
Berceuses du chat (1916)
Two Poems of Konstantin Balmont (1911)
Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet: No. 2 (1919)
Four Russian Peasant Songs (1914-1917)
Three Pieces for Solo Clarinet: No. 3 (1919)
The Fox (1916)

Farmyard burlesque in one scene. Libretto by the composer after the Russian Folk Tales by Aleksandr Afanasyev

The Nightingale (1914)
Conte lyrique in three acts
Libretto by Stepan Mitussov, after the story
The Emperor’s Nightingale by Hans Christian Andersen

Ragtime, Pribaoutki, Berceuses du chat, Four Russian Peasants Songs, and The Fox: by arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc., publisher and copyright owner. Le Rossignol (The Nightingale) and Two Poems of Konstantin Balmond by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., publisher and copyright owner.

COC PRODUCTION

A COC co-production with Festival d’Aix-en-Provence and Opéra de Lyon in collaboration with Ex Machina (Quebec)

Last performed by the COC in 2009
April 13, 14, 22, May 1, 2, 10, 12, 13, 15, 19, 2018
Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, Toronto
Sung in Russian with English SURTITLES™

Lothar Odinius as The Fisherman in the COC’s world premiere production in 2009.

THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

(in order of vocal appearance)

Pribaoutki
Allyson McHardy*
Berceuses du chat
Lindsay Ammann
Two Poems of Konstantin Balmont
Danika Lorën†
Four Russian Peasant Songs
COC Women’s Chorus

The Fox
Tenor 1
Miles Mykkanen
Tenor 2
Owen McCausland
Baritone 1
Bruno Roy
Baritone 2
Oleg Tsibulko

The Nightingale
The Fisherman
Owen McCausland*
The Nightingale
Jane Archibald
The Cook
Lauren Eberwein†
The Chamberlain
Anatoli Sivko†
The Bonze
Michael Uloth†
Chorus Solo Soprano
Alexandra Lennox-Pomeroy
Chorus Solo Alto
Susan Black
Chorus Solo Tenor
Stephen McClare
The Emperor
Oleg Tsibulko
Japanese Envoy 1
Miles Mykkanen†
Japanese Envoy 2
Samuel Chan†
Japanese Envoy 3
Bruno Roy†
Death
Lindsay Ammann

The Cast and Creative Team

Conductor
Johannes Debus
Director
Robert Lepage
Revival Director
Marilyn Gronsdal†
Set Designer
Carl Fillion
Puppet Designer
Michael Curry
Costume Designer
Mara Gottler
Lighting Designer
Étienne Boucher
Puppet Choreographer
Martin Genest
Revival Puppet Choreographer
Caroline Tanguay
Price Family Chorus Master
Sandra Horst†
Stage Manager
Jenifer Kowal
SURTITLES™ Producer
Gunta Dreifelds

Johannes Debus is generously underwritten by George & Kathy Dembroski
Jane Archibald’s performance is generously sponsored by Jack Whiteside
Danika Lorën’s performance is generously sponsored by Marcia Lewis Brown
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
Sandra Horst and the COC Chorus are generously underwritten by Tim & Frances Price

* 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, including one intermission.

PART I: 45 minutes INTERMISSION 30 minutes PART II: 45 minutes
There are many myths and much speculation about the dawn of theatre. My personal favourite is simple: Man was sitting around a bonfire in a cave telling stories and one day he stood up and used his shadow to illustrate his tale. Theatre was born using nothing more than light and imagination.

Today there is no shortage of ways in which to use light when creating a performance, certainly no barrier to imagination, and inspiration can come in any form at any time. I was fascinated to see puppetry used in an opera several years ago, and realized that although they are not an obvious pairing, the two disciplines are actually quite suited to each other. Puppetry pulled the poetry out of the libretto and the poetic ideas out of the music in a way I hadn’t seen before.

Of course, to invite puppets into a show, one must find the right artistic context to do so. The Nightingale and Other Short Fables—a collage of Stravinsky’s pieces based on stories in which the main characters are animals—appears to me to be the perfect ground to blend the sophistication and grandiose aspects of opera with a vocabulary coming from our childhood.

Exploring the way in which we “see” music has always been a fascination of mine. Fortunately, Stravinsky’s particular genius was to embed all of the subtext in the music so that it is very clear—very precise and poetic, crazy and even light and imagination.

The Nightingale
At the seashore just before sunrise, a Fisherman hears the song of the Nightingale, which causes him to forget his troubles. The fame of the bird’s song has reached the Emperor who sends his Chamberlain, the Cook and courtiers to the forest to invite her to sing at court. The Nightingale accepts the invitation, but says that her sweetest song is heard in the forest.

At the Emperor’s palace, the Nightingale’s singing touches the ruler deeply. However, when Japanese Envoys arrive with a gift of a mechanical nightingale, the real bird flies away. Angered, the Emperor banishes the real Nightingale from his hall and names the mechanical bird First Singer of the Bedside Table on the Left.

The Fox
This moralizing farmyard tale begins with the Cock boasting of his prowess with his hen. The hungry Fox initially deceives the Cock, twice enticing him down from his perch but each time the Cock is rescued by his friends the Ram and the Cat. After the Cock’s second rescue, the Cat and the Ram strangle the Fox, and the three friends celebrate in dance and song.

Robert Lepage, 2009

SYNOPSIS

The Fox

The Nightingale

INTERMISSION

Robert Wolansky*
Tom Hazlitt
Tony Flynt,
Elaine Thompson
Olga Laktionova
Rachel Desoer,
Paul Widner,
Alastair Eng,
CELLO
Yosef Tamir
Beverley Spotton
Angela Rudden*
Nicholaos Papadakis*
Sheila Jaffé (leave of absence)
Katrina Chitty*
Joshua Greenlaw,
Keith Hamm,
VIOLA
Paul Zevenuihzen, Principal
Csaba Koczó, Assistant Principal
James Aylesworth (leave of absence)
Jennie Baccante*
Catherine Cossey*
Hiroko Kagawa*
Aya Miyagawa
Lynn Ku*
Renee London*
Alexey Perenatov*
Louise Tardif (leave of absence)
Andrea Tynes*
Marianne Urke
Joanna Zabrowarna
VIOLIN I
Marie Bérard, Concertmaster
The Concertmaster’s chair has been endowed in perpetuity by
Joey and Toby Tanenbaum
Aaron Schwebel, Associate Concertmaster
Jamie Krupe, Assistant Concertmaster
Anne Armstrong
Sandra Baron
Bethany Bergman
Elizabeth Johnston
Nancy Kershaw
Dominique Laplante
Yakov Lerner
Jayne Maddison
Neria Mayer
VIOLIN II
Paul Zevenuihzen, Principal
Csaba Koczó, Assistant Principal
James Aylesworth (leave of absence)
Jennifer Baccante*
Catherine Cossey*
Hiroko Kagawa*
Aya Miyagawa
Lynn Ku*
Renee London*
Alexey Perenatov*
Louise Tardif (leave of absence)
Andrea Tynes*
Marianne Urke
Joanna Zabrowarna
VIOLA
Keith Hamm, Principal
Joshua Greenlaw, Assistant Principal
Principals (leave of absence)
Catherine Gray, Acting Assistant Principal
Katrina Chitty*
Carolyn Blackwell*
Sheila Jaffé (leave of absence)
Nicholas Papadakis* 
Angela Rudden*
Beverley Spotton
Yosef Tamir
CELLO
Bryan Epperson, Principal
Alastair Eng, Associate Principal
Principals (leave of absence)
Paul Widner, Assistant Principal
Rachel Desper, Acting Assistant Principal
Maurizio Baccante
Olga Laktonova
Elaine Thompson
BASS
Tony Flynn, Acting Principal* 
Robert Speer, Assistant Principal
Tom Hazlett
Paul Langley
Robert Wolansky*
FLUTE
Douglas Stewart, Principal
Shelley Brown
Leslie Newman*
PICCOLO
Shelley Brown
OBEO
Mark Rogers, Principal
Jasper Hitchcock*
ENGLISH HORN
Lesley Young
CLARINET
James T. Shields, Principal
(leave of absence)
Dominic Desautels, Acting Principal* 
Colleen Cook
Michele Verheuil*
SOLE CLARINET
Juan Olivares*
Eb CLARINET
Dominic Desautels*
Michele Verheuil*
BASS CLARINET
Colleen Cook
BASSOON
Eric Hall, Principal
Lisa Smith
CONTRA BASSOON
William Cannaway*
HORN
Mikhailo Biabik, Principal
Janet Anderson
Bardhyl Gjevori
Gary Patterson
TRUMPET
Robert Weymouth, Principal 
Brendan Cassin*
Andrew Dubelsten* 
Michael Fedyshyn*
PICCOLO TRUMPET
Brendan Cassin*
TROMBONE
Charles Benaroya, Principal
Ian Cowie
BASS TROMBONE
Herbert Poole
TUBA
Scott Irvine, Principal
(leave of absence)
Jennifer Stephen, Acting Principal*
TIMPANI
Michael Perry, Principal
PERCUSSION
Trevor Tureski, Principal
Michele Colton* 
Ryan Scott*
HARP
Sarah Davidson, Principal
Sanya Eng*
PIANO
Stephen B. Hargreaves*
CELESTE
Michael Spassov*
CIMBALUM
Alexandru Sura*
MUSIC LIBRARIAN
Wayne Vogan
ASSISTANT MUSIC LIBRARIAN
Ondrej Golias
STAGE LIBRARIAN
Paul Langley
PERSONNEL MANAGER
Ian Cowie
*extra musician

FREE EVENTS!

Opera Insights:

Nightingale: Playing with puppetry
Tuesday, April 17 at 7 p.m.
Education Centre, Four Seasons Centre

Opera Chorus Sing-Along
Tuesday, April 24 at 7 p.m.
NEW LOCATION:
Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre

Events are free but require a ticket for entry.

Call 416-363-8231 or visit coc.ca/OperaInsights
Johannes Debus, Conductor, COC Music Director (Berlin, Germany/Toronto, ON) 
COC CREDITS: The Abduction from the Seraglio (2018); Götterdämmerung (2017); Ariadne, Siegfried and The Marriage of Figaro (2016). RECENT: Salome, The Tales of Hoffmann (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, Cincinnati Orchestra, Houston Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, Aspen Music Festival and Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. UPCOMING: Eugene Onegin, Hadrian, Elektra, Otello (COC).

Lauren Eberwein, The Cook, The Nightingale (Soprano, Qualicum Beach, BC) 
COC CREDITS: Countess Ceprano, Rigoletto; Gianetta, The Elixir of Love (2018); Wellgunde, Götterdämmerung (2017). RECENT: Artist in Residence (Marlboro Music Festival); Soloist (Garnet Bach Ensemble, Philadelphia); Franz Liszt: Holy and Infernal Genius (Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center); Olivia, Cold Mountain; Clairen, Capriccio; Der Komponist, Anadre auf Naxos (Opera Philadelphia); Handel’s Israel in Egypt (New York Choral Society/Carnegie Hall).

Carl Fillion, Set Designer (Baie-Comeau, QC) 
COC CREDITS: The Nightingale and Other Short Fables (2009). RECENT: The Ring Cycle (Metropolitan Opera); Simon Boccanegra (Gran Teatro del Liceu); The Rake’s Progress (Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie); (as director) Unamuna (Teatro de la Abadía, Madrid). UPCOMING: Cirque du Soleil (Touring China).

Martin Genest, Puppet Choreographer (Quebec City, QC) 
COC CREDITS: The Nightingale and Other Short Fables (2009). RECENT: Stage Director: Joya; Les Chemins invisibles (Cirque du Soleil); Le Bourgeois gentilhomme; L’Odyssée; L’Opéra de Quat’Sous (Théâtre du Trident); Les 40 ans du Grand (Grand Théâtre de Québec). UPCOMING: Coriolanus (Stratford Festival Theatre); Timon of Athens (Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival).

Marilyn Gronsdal, Revival Director (Toronto, ON) 
SELECT COC CREDITS: assistant director: Rigoletto (2018); Götterdämmerung (2017); Norma (2016); Mosè in Egitto; Pyramus and Thisbe (with Lamento d’Arianna and il combattimento di Clorinda e Tancred); associate director: Siegfried (2016); (director): La Bohème (2009). RECENT (director): Don Giovanni (UofT Opera); La Coccinella (The Glenn Gould School). UPCOMING (assistant director): Eugene Onegin and Così fan tutte (COC).

Sandra Horst, Price Family Chorus Master Chair (Toronto, ON) 

Jennifer Kowal, Stage Manager (Thornhill, ON) 

Alexandra Lennox-Pomeroy, Chorus Solo Soprano, The Nightingale (Soprano, Orangeville, ON) 

Robert Lepage, Director (Quebec City, QC) 
COC CREDITS: Bluebeard’s Castle/Erwartung (2015, 2002, 1995, 1993); The Nightingale and Other Short Fables (2009, BAM 2011). SELECT CREDITS: The Ring Cycle and L’amour de loin (Metropolitan Opera); Ka and Todem (Cirque du Soleil); 887, Needles and Opium (Ex Machina). ADDITIONAL: Founder/Artistic Director, Ex Machina; Officer of the Order of Canada; Légion d’honneur; Governor General’s Performing Arts Award.

Daniela Lorèn, Solo, Two Poems of Konstantin Balmont, (Soprano, Saskatoon, SK) 
COC CREDITS: Woglinde, Götterdämmerung (2017). RECENT: Ensemble, BOUND (Against the Grain Theatre), Coloratura, Kopernikus (The Banff Centre); Rosina, The Barber of Seville (Saskatoon Opera). UPCOMING: Musetta, La Bohème (COC).

Owen McCausland, Tenor, The Fox; The Fisherman, The Nightingale (Tenor, Saint John, NB) 
COC CREDITS: Pedrillo, The Abduction from the Seraglio (2018); Tamino, The Magic Flute (2017); Luciano, Ariadne (2016); Testo, Pyramus and Thise (with Lamento d’Arianna and Il combatimento di Clorinda e Tancred) (2015); Don Juan, Don Quichotte (2014); Lord Ceci, Roberto devereux (2014). RECENT: Tenor soloist, Musik für das Ende (Soundstreams Canada); Messiah (London Symphony, Symphony Nova Scotia); Seven Deadly Sins (Toronto Symphony); Lord Arturo Bucklaw, Lucile di Lammermoor (Pacific Opera Victoria). UPCOMING: Roderigo, Otello (COC); Jaquino, Flotelio (Pacific Opera Victoria).

Stephen McFarlane, Chorus Tenor Solo, The Nightingale (Tenor, Toronto, ON) 
COC CREDITS: Chorus Solo Tenor, The Nightingale (2009); Big Convict, From the House of the Dead (2008); Young Servant, Elektra (2007); Andreas, Wozzeck (2006); The Doctor, The Handmaid’s Tale (2004); Harry, The Girl of the Golden West (2000); COC Chorus Member (1984 to present).

Lothar Odnies, Adam Luther, and Peter Barrett (background) in The Fox, part of the COC’s world premiere production in 2009.
ALLSYON MICHARDY. Solo, Průběžní (Mezzo-soprano, Oshawa, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: Julie Riel, Louis Riel (2017); Sara, Roberto Devereux (2014). RECENT: Julie Riel, Louis Riel (Festival Opéra de Québec); Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation (Toronto Symphony Orchestra); Ligeti’s Requiem (Seattle Symphony); Markante, La Damnation de Faust (Grand Park); Orsini, Lucrezia Borgia (Theater St. Gallen). UPCOMING: Céphise, Pygmalion: Junon, Actéon (Opera Atelier); Dvorak’s Stabat Mater (Vancouver Symphony Orchestra).

MILES MYKKANEN. Tenor 1, The Fox, Japanese Envoy 1, The Nightingale (Tenor, Bessemer, MI, USA)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: Candidie, Candidie (Palm Beach Opera and Arizona Opera); Tamino, Die Zauberflöte (The Juilliard School); Peter Quint, The Turn of the Screw (Opera Columbus); Orchestral debuts: New York Philharmonic and Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. UPCOMING: Candidie, Candidie (Tanglewood); Nikolaus Sprink, Silent Night (Minnesota Opera); Flute, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Opera Philadelphia); Orchestral debuts: National Symphony Orchestra and Cleveland Orchestra.

BRUNO ROY. Baritone 2, The Fox, Japanese Envoy 3, The Nightingale (Baritone, Montreal, QC)
COC CREDITS: Marullo, Rigoletto (2018); Second Priest, The Magic Flute (2017). RECENT: Mercutio, Romeo et Juliette (Canadian Vocal Arts Institute); Matt, Crush (Banff Centre); Belcore, The Elixir of Love (Opéra de Montréal/Opéra McGill); John Brooke, Little Women; Count Almaviva, The Marriage of Figaro (Opera McGill). UPCOMING: Marcello, La Bohème (Highlands Opera Studio).

ANATOLI SIVKO. The Chamberlain, The Nightingale (Bass-baritone, Belarus)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: Samuel, A Masked Ball (Bayerische Staatsoper/Royal Opera House, Covent Garden); Don Basilio, The Barber of Seville (Glyndebourne); Don Alfonso, Così fan tutte, The Barber of Seville (Angers Nantes Opéra/Teatr Wielki/Opéra de Québec); General Polkan, Don Giovanni (Bolshoi Theatre). UPCOMING: Don Pasquale (Bayerische Staatsoper); The Barber of Seville; Don Basilio; The Marriage of Figaro (Toronto Summer Music Festival/MYOpera); A Mandarin, The Nightingale and Other Short Fables (2009).

CAROLINE TANGUY. Revival Puppet Choreographer (Montreal, QC)
COC CREDITS: The Nightingale and Other Short Fables (2009). RECENT: Bijoux (Festival of Castillers); The Nightingale and Other Short Fables (The Musiktheater Amsterdam/Opéra National de Lyon/Festival International d’Art Lyrique d’Aix-en-Provence/Festival d’Opéra de Québec); Cabaret Gainsbourg (Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario).

ANNA THEODOSAKIS. Assistant Director (Vancouver, BC)
COC CREDITS: Arabella (2017). RECENT: Director: The Tender Land and Les contes d’Hoffmann (Opera Laurier); L’elisir d’amore (Centre for Opera Studies Italy); La Bohème (Muskoka Opera); The Rape of Lucretia (Toronto Summer Music Festival/MYOpera); The Medium (UofT Opera); Assistant Director: Briefs (Tapestry Opera). UPCOMING: From the Diary of Virginia Woolf (Muss 9).

OLEG TSIBULKO. Baritone 2, The Fox, The Emperor, The Nightingale (Bass, Moldova)
COC DEBUT. RECENT: Gremin, Eugene Onegin (Angers Nantes Opéra/Teatr Wielki/Opéra de Nice); Zambri, Ciro in BabILONI (Rossini Festival, Pescara); Orore, Semiramide and Frate, Don Carlos (Maggio Musicale Fiorentino); Tutor, Comte Ory (MusicFestival Dortmund); Banquo, Macbeth (Buxton Festival); Sarastro, Die Zauberflöte; Colline, La Bohème; Angelotti, Tosca; Count Rodolfo, La Sonnambula; Don Alfonso, Cos/i fan tutte, Figaro, Le nozze di Figaro (Boisni Theatre). UPCOMING: Verdi’s Requiem (Teatro Massimo di Palermo); General Polkan, The Golden Cockerel (Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra); Gremin, Eugene Onegin (COC).

MICHAEL ULOTH. The Bonze, The Nightingale (Bass, Toronto, ON)
COC CREDITS: Truffaldino, Anadrome auf Navox; 2nd Armed Man, The Magic Flute (2011); The Bonze, The Nightingale and Other Short Fables; Imperial Commissioner, Madame Butterfly; Snug, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2009). RECENT: Bass, Kopernikus (The Banff Centre for Arts); The Bonze, The Nightingale and Other Short Fables (Opéra de Lyon/Brooklyn Academy of Music); Don Pasquale, Don Pasquale (Saskatoon Opera); Sparafucile, Rigoletto (Saskatoon Opera).

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THE MECHANICS OF MAGIC
DIVING INTO THE TECHNICAL WIZARDRY
BEHIND THE NIGHTINGALE
BY KRISTIN MCKINNON

When The Nightingale and Other Short Fables first hit the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts stage in 2009, audiences were awestruck. The game-changing production from Robert Lepage, one of Canada’s most respected theatre visionaries, flips operatic convention on its head and pushes the boundaries of this 500-year-old art form. Singers perform in a pool of water while manipulating intricate puppets; the orchestra plays Stravinsky’s enchanting music in full sight of the audience; acrobats enact elaborate shadow puppet vignettes—it’s not your typical opera. Now in its ninth incarnation and having met with great acclaim after travelling to France, the Netherlands, Brooklyn, and Quebec, The Nightingale continues to surprise, delight, and enchant with its theatrical magic.

Opening with a series of Stravinsky’s instrumental works and song cycles, including Pribaoutki, Berceuses du chat, and Two Poems of Konstantin Balmont, the production breaks with theatrical convention by inviting the audience to witness some of the technical wizardry involved in creating this piece. The orchestra, which is normally hidden out of sight, is fully visible on stage for the entirety of the production. “I always wanted to do an opera where people are more conscious of the orchestra,” said Lepage in a 2009 interview. “You want people to see the instruments. You make people conscious of the different musical layers.” Placing the spotlight on the orchestra not only allows the exceptional musicians to shine, it also draws attention to the collective work of the performers sharing the stage. This philosophy forms the basis of Lepage’s multi-disciplinary performing arts collective, Ex Machina, and seeps into every aspect of The Nightingale.

The idea of exploring the theatrical process continues with a journey through the evolution of theatre, beginning with a showcase of one of the earliest forms of theatre: shadow puppetry. “Thousands of years ago, people would gather in a quarry, build a big bonfire and tell stories to each other,” says Lepage. “Eventually someone had the idea of standing up and using the shadow to tell the story and that’s how theatre was born.”

In the first half of the opera, the acrobats are fully visible on stage as they perform basic, yet impressive, finger puppetry in front of a single light source. “It was important for this to start with the style of puppetry and theatre that is the most low-tech possible... very simple hand shadow puppetry that progresses into the world of shadows,” says Lepage. With The Fox, the shadow puppetry becomes increasingly elaborate. The acrobats move behind a screen, but there is still a focus on process awareness since the screen is elevated 18 inches above the ground, revealing parts of the acrobats’ bodies as they manipulate themselves into a menagerie of creatures.

Lepage and his team pull out all of the technical stops with the final piece, The Nightingale. Drawing on traditional Japanese, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese techniques, renowned puppet designer Michael Curry (whose work has been featured in The Lion King on Broadway, the Olympics, and Cirque du Soleil, among other places) has created intricate puppets to accompany each of the singers, including the 34-member chorus. The puppets are vastly individual and the intuitive design means that even singers with no prior puppetry experience can quickly learn the art form and create a bond with their puppets. “It’s a daunting challenge for them, but once they get into it it’s quite lovely to watch a singer looking at themselves in miniature,” said Curry in 2009.

If adopting a puppet companion wasn’t challenging enough, some of the artists must also perform in waist-deep water. Arguably the most striking feature of The Nightingale’s set is the magical pool that floods the orchestra pit, serving as the stage for much of the second act. Each of the 17 singers and acrobats who perform in the water, disguise a wetsuit under their costumes and are met by a dressing team with towels and flip-flops when exiting the pool. The COC’s costume department has even created duplicates of some of the costumes for use in the drier scenes.

Since its premiere, few productions have stimulated the imagination quite like The Nightingale and Other Short Fables. Its exploration of magnificent puppetry, dazzling acrobats, and stunning stage imagery transcends all boundaries of opera. Lepage’s ingenuity keeps audiences enthralled by offering a glimpse behind the curtain—putting the magic on display for all to see.

Kristin McKinnon is the COC’s Publicist and Content Producer.

BY THE NUMBERS

- 67,000 litres of water in the pool
- 78 tonnes: weight of pool and water
- 75 puppets to keep dry
- 32 crew members to assemble the set
- 21 wetsuits worn by cast and crew
- 8 hours to assemble the pool
- 5 acrobat-puppeteers
- 1 shipping container full of water
- 1 metre pool depth

For left: Acrobats work in shadow to bring The Fox to life. Left: In The Nightingale, Ilya Bannick as the Emperor manipulates his stunning puppet. Below: Loyer Octavin as the Fisherman manipulates a puppet and a fishing boat, while singing water-high in water in the flooded orchestra pit.
ANNA BOLENA

BY GAETANO DONIZETTI
Lyric tragedy in two acts • Libretto by Felice Romani
First performance: Teatro Carcano, Milan, December 26, 1830

NEW COC PRODUCTION
April 28, May 3, 5, 8, 11, 16, 20, 24, 26, 2018
Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™

THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM
(in order of vocal appearance)

* Graduate of the COC Ensemble Studio

Giovanna Seymour, lady-in-waiting to Anna
Keri Alkema
Anna Bolena
Sondra Radvanovsky
Smeton, a musician
Allyson McHardy*
Enrico
Christian Van Horn
Lord Rochefort, Anna’s brother
Thomas Goerz

Lord Riccardo Percy
Bruce Sledge
Hervey, a court official
Jonathan Johnson*

Conductor
Corrado Rovaris
Director
Stephen Lawless
Set Designer
Benoit Dugardyn

Costume Designer
Ingeborg Bernerth
Original Lighting Designer
Mark McCullough
Lighting Designer
Reinhard Traub
Price Family Chorus Master
Sandra Horst*
Stage Manager
Stephanie Marrs
SURTITLES™ Producer
Gunta Dreifelds

ACT I: 90 minutes INTERMISSION 25 minutes ACT II: 90 minutes

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

Major artist support made possible by Jack Whiteside
Sondra Radvanovsky’s performance is generously sponsored by The Tauba and Solomon Spiro Family Foundation
Sandra Horst and the COC Chorus are generously underwritten by Tim & Frances Price

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

Sondra Radvanovsky as Anna.
**SYNOPSIS**

**ACT I. Scene i**
It is three years since Enrico (King Henry VIII) divorced his first wife Catherine of Aragon and married Anna (Anne Boleyn). Courtiers express concern that Enrico’s attention is now directed to someone else. Giovanna (Jane Seymour) enters, trying to suppress her remorse for her secret relationship with Enrico. Anna enters with Smeton, her page, and her attendants, to await Enrico. The queen is dejected and asks Smeton to lift her mood with a song. It upsets the Queen as it reminds her of her first love, Riccardo Percy, whom she rejected to marry the King. Realizing the King will not visit her tonight, Anna sadly advises Giovanna to never be tempted by a royal throne. Alone, Giovanna expresses her anguish and guilt. Enrico enters and Giovanna tells him she will no longer carry on an illicit relationship. Enrico vows to marry her and make her Queen but Giovanna is horrified at this means for Anna.

**Scene ii**
A heartbroken Percy is relieved to have been exiled, but he is concerned by rumours that Anna is not happy. Her brother Rochefort is not able to reassure him. Anna, Henri, huntsmen and courtiers enter. Enrico tells Percy it is Anna who has spoken on his behalf. Percy shows such gratitude to the Queen that the courtiers become alarmed. Enrico orders continued surveillance on Anna and Percy.

**Scene iii**
Smeton has stolen a small portrait of Anna, whom he loves. Hearing footsteps, he hides himself. Anna and Rochefort enter. Anna is convinced by her brother to receive Percy, who then enters. She is shocked when Percy once again declares his love. She swears to never meet him again but when Percy draws his sword to kill himself, Smeton emerges from hiding, drawing his own sword to protect the Queen, whom he thinks Percy is attacking. Anna faints, and Enrico enters with Giovanna and courtiers. The stolen portrait falls from Smeton’s clothing. Enrico assumes the Queen is deceased and takes her to his private chambers. It is three years since Enrico married Anna. Percy is overjoyed at her words. She swears to never meet him again but he is concerned by rumours that Anna is not happy. Her brother Rochefort is not able to reassure him. Anna, Henri, huntsmen and courtiers enter. Enrico tells Percy it is Anna who has spoken on his behalf. Percy shows such gratitude to the Queen that the courtiers become alarmed. Enrico orders continued surveillance on Anna and Percy.

**ACT II. Scene i**
Anna’s attendants declare their unyielding loyalty to her, as they are summoned to give testimony to charges against her of treasonous infidelity. Anna is left alone to pray. Giovanna enters to warn Anna and advise her that if she confesses to the charges, the King will divorce her but spare her life. Anna is horrified at the idea and prays for justice against her unknown rival. Distraught, Giovanna finally admits that she is Anna’s rival. Stunned, Anna forgives her and bids her leave.

**Scene ii**
Smeton has confessed to an illicit relationship with Anna after having been assured that this confession will save the Queen’s life. Enrico leaves the chamber as Anna and Percy are being brought in. Anna begs Enrico to spare her honour even if he takes her life. She swears her innocence as does Percy. Anna claims her only guilt to be her rejection of Percy’s true love for the glory of the throne. Percy is overjoyed at her words. Enrico is enraged and intent on having them both executed. Anna and Percy enter the chamber and Giovanna appears to beg Enrico to be merciful to Anna, an idea that the King scorns. The Lords emerge with Hervey to announce that Anna and Percy are guilty. Both are to be executed (as are Smeton and Rochefort) unless the King gives clemency. All plead with Enrico but he stands firm.

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT III. Scene i**
Percy and Rochefort are to be spared, but they refuse clemency when they learn that Anna is still to be executed. Anna’s ladies grieve for her emotional and mental state. She enters in a delusion, thinking she is celebrating her wedding to the King. She then imagines Percy before her and is crushed by guilt. She longs for the days of her youth, when her love for Percy was new and unsullied. Hervey enters and summons Rochefort, Percy and Smeton. Smeton confesses that he told the court they loved each other because that was his secret hope. Anna falls into a delirium again. She comes to at the sound of crowds outside proclaiming Giovanna as their new queen. Anna collapses with grief, vowing to forgive the new queen and the king, as all four prisoners are led to their deaths.

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**DIRECTOR’S NOTE**

__Anna Bolena__ (Anne Boleyn) brings us to the third (and final) of our trilogy of Donizetti’s Tudor operas (after Maria Stuarda and Roberto Devereux), although chronologically speaking it is the first of the trio, dealing with events that predate the other two. We remain within the framework of our GLOBE Theatre setting, now suitably altered to reflect an earlier and darker milieu than the sophistication of Elizabeth I’s reign, a world where entertainment was more about the bear-pit than the nobility. We are well aware that Shakespeare’s (as yet unwritten) verse, a world as much influenced by the medieval as by the Renaissance, is a world we are well aware that Shakespeare’s verse, a world as much influenced by the medieval as by the Renaissance.

Of course, it would be wrong to think of the characters in __Anna Bolena__ (and indeed Donizetti’s other two Tudor operas) as in any way historical. They are works of fiction. The Giovanna (Jane) Seymour of Donizetti’s opera is a long way from how Tudor propagandists sought to present the historical Jane Seymour, Henry VIII’s (Enrico’s) third wife. Jane was portrayed as almost saint-like, martyred on the altar of providing Henry with his much longed-for male heir. Her fictionalised counterpart is radically different. Giovanna is a woman attracted to the flame of power who comes to empathise with the plight of her rival (Anna) and who ultimately pays the price for her ambition. Enrico, in the opera, conforms to the stereotype of Holbein’s famous portrait, a vastly bloated and resplendent tyrant, whereas the historical Henry (at the time of his marriage to Anne Boleyn) was still slim, relatively young and handsome. Lord Riccardo (Henry) Percy reflects the prevailing early 19th-century idea of the Byronic hero rather than any 16th-century actuality (indeed, the historical Percy was in fact a judge at Anna’s trial rather than her suitor). Donizetti and Romani toy with history by fictionalizing what they don’t know between the facts that they do (much in the same way that the series _The Crown_ does today).

Donizetti and his librettist Felice Romani write from a different perspective to our own Anglocentric position and view these characters through the prism of the 19th century and Catholicism. Both Henry and Elizabeth would be viewed as both monstrous and heretical figures (because of Henry’s many divorces and marriages and because of Elizabeth’s refusal to marry), as much worthy of ridicule as of sympathy.

But it is with Anna herself that the difference between the actual and fictional worlds is most marked. Donizetti is renowned for writing strong tragic female roles like Maria Stuarda, Elisabetta, Lucia and Anna Bolena. Anna differs from the first three characters in her refusal to be victimized. Anna Boleyn was executed (on trumped-up charges) for her inability to present Henry with a male heir. In the opera, Anna is executed because her husband has fallen in love with another woman. She goes to her death raging against a patriarchy that sees her as simply dispensable, providing an example to women of the kinds of sacrifice she was willing to make.

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**Stephen Lawless, director**
In March, Alexandra Kim (right), Curator at Kensington Palace, met with Chloe Anderson (left) of the COC’s wardrobe department in anticipation of Monday, April 30 at 7 p.m. at the Education Centre, of a presentation on April 30.

**FREE EVENT!**

**OPERA INSIGHTS**

**Anna Bolena: The role of clothing at the court of Henry VIII**

Monday, April 30 at 7 p.m.

Events are free but require a ticket for entry.

Call 416-363-8231 or visit coc.ca/OperaInsights

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**Canadian Opera Company Orchestra**

**Violin I**
- Marie Berard, Concertmaster
  The Concertmaster’s chair has been endowed in perpetuity by Joey and Toby Tenenbaum
  - Aaron Schwebel, Associate Concertmaster
  - Jamie Kruse, Assistant Concertmaster

**Anne Armstrong**
- Sandra Baron
- Bethany Bergman
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- Nancy Kershaw
- Bethany Bergman
- Sandra Baron
- Anne Armstrong

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  - Ian Cowie

**Bass Trombone**
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**Canadian Opera Company Chorus**

**Sopranos**
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- Margaret Evans
- Virginia Hatfield
- Alexandre Lennon-Pomeroy
- Ingrid Mart
- Eve Rachel McLeod
- Victoria Pinington
- Elizabeth Polse
- Jennifer Robinson
- Teresa van der Hoeven
- Ilana Zarankin

**Mezzo-Sopranos**
- Marianne Bindig
- Susan Black
- Sandra Boyes
- Wendy Hatala Foley
- Lilian Kilianski
- Kathryn Knapp
- Anne McWatt
- Karen Olimyk
- Megan Quick
- Marianne Sasso
- Vilma Indra Vitolis
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- Tonatiuh Abrego
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- Taras Chmil
- Stephen Erickson
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- Michael Downie
- Jason Nedecy
- Michael Sproule
- Michael Uloth
- Jan Vancu
- Peter Wiens
- Gene Wu
- Michael York

**Basso Continuo**
- Mark DeMasi

**Percussion**
- Torben Verbergs

**Set Design**
- Stéphane Mayer

**Lighting**
- Alastair Eng

**Costumes**
- Oren Gradus

**Hair**
- Vanya Abrahams

**Staging**
- Bryan Oldham

**Mendelssohn Society**
- John Kinter

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**Canadian Opera Company 2017/2018**

**Opera Insights**

**Anna Bolena**

**Music Staff**
- Giulio Laguzzi (Head Coach)
- Michael Shannon
- Stéphane Mayer (Ensemble Studio Intern Coach)

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- Roberto Kalb

**Assistant Director**
- Allison Grant

**Assistant Stage Managers**
- Kate Sanderson
- Chris Porter

**Assistant Lighting Designers**
- Michael Kangas
- Jennifer Lennon
- David Tissot

**Fight Director**
- James Binkley

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**Oren Gradus (left) as Enrico, and Sondra Radvanovsky (right) as Anna (Washington Opera, 2012)**

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**Oren Gradus (left) as Enrico, and Sondra Radvanovsky (right) as Anna (Washington Opera, 2012)**
BIOGRAPHIES: ANNA BOLENA

KERI ALKEMA, Giovanna Seymour (Soprano, Nashville, TN, USA)
SELECT COC CREDITS: Tosca, Tosca (2017); Vitellia, La clemenza di Tito (2015).
RECENT: Amelia, Simon Boccanegra (Opéra de Dijon); Amelia, A Masked Ball (Gran Teatre del Liceu); Tosca, Tosca (Oper Frankfurt/English National Opera, and Palm Beach Opera); Donna Elvira, Don Giovanni (Santa Fe Opera); Elisabetta, Maria Stuarda (Seattle Opera, Edmonton Opera).
UPCOMING: Vitellia, La clemenza di Tito (Théâtre du Capitole); Tosca, Tosca (Washington National Opera).

INGEBOG BERNERTH, Costume Designer (Ludwigshafen am Rhein, Germany)
COC CREDITS: Roberto Devereux (2014); Maria Stuarda (2010).
RECENT: Das Rheingold (Oper Frankfurt); Lohengrin (Theater Krefeld und Mönchengladbach); Macbeth (Staatsoper Hamburg); Götterdämmerung, Siegfried, Die Walküre (Oper Frankfurt); The Flying Dutchman (Washington National Opera); Salome (Virginia Opera, Portland Opera); Guillaume Tell (Oper Graz); Don Carlos (Korea National Opera).
UPCOMING: Lohengrin (Oper Bonn); Fidelio (Theater Chemnitz).

BENOÎT DUGARDYN (1957-2018), Set Designer (Bruges, Belgium)
COC CREDITS: II Trovatore (2005); Maria Stuarda (2010).
RECENT: Yevgeny Onegin (Opéra-Théâtre de Metz Métropole); The Marriage of Figaro (Pittsburgh Opera/Washington National Opera); Aida (Chorégies d’Orange); Der Rosenkavalier (Bolshoi Theatre); Werther (Opéra-Théâtre de Metz-Métropole); Manon Lescaut (Opéra Royal de Wallonie); Carmen (Santa Fe Opera); Salome (Portland Opera).
UPCOMING: Lucia di Lammermoor (Oldenburg State Theatre).

The COC was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Benoît Dugardyn this past winter. Among his work for the COC was the entire Donizetti Tudor trilogy and II Trovatore. The international opera world has lost a great designer and colleague. Our deepest condolences to Benoît’s family, friends and loved ones.

THOMAS GOERZ, Lord Rochefort (Bass-baritone, Kitchener, ON)
COC CREDITS: Ojara, Arabella (2017); Baron Dufoi, La Traviata (2015); Quince, A Midsummer Night’s Dream; Benoit/Alcindoro, La Bohème (2009); Nikitich/Chernikovsky, Boris Godunov (2002).
RECENT: Owen Hart, Dead Man Walking; Lodovico, Otello (Vancouver Opera); Titulre, Parsifal (Le Festival de Lanaudière); Mikado, The Mikado (Calgary Opera); Father Palmer, Silent Night (l’Opéra de Montréal).

ALLISON GRANT, Assistant Director (Toronto, ON)
COC CREDITS: Ariodante and The Marriage of Figaro (2016); Revival Director, Semele (at Brooklyn Academy of Music, 2015); Choreographer, Dido and Aeneas (2003); Movement Director, Queen of Spades (2002).
RECENT: The Magic Flute (Hawaii Opera Theatre/Sarasota Opera); The Marriage of Figaro (Sarasota Opera); Die Fledermaus (Edmonton Opera); Roméo et Juliette; Così fan tutte (Vancouver Opera); Carmen; Falstaff (Opera Hamilton); (choreographer) Eugene Onegin (Vancouver Opera/COC); Sondheim’s Company; Carmen (Western University).
UPCOMING: Teaching, directing and choreographing at Randolph College for the Performing Arts.

SANDRA HORTS, Price Family Chorus Master Chair (Toronto, ON)
SELECT COC CREDITS: Anna Bolena (2018); The Abduction from the Seraglio, Rigoletto (2018); Arabella, The Elixir of Love, The Magic Flute, Götterdämmerung (2017); Ariodante (2016); Norma (2016, 1998); RECENT: (conductor) Vengeance, Of Thee I Sing, Prima Zamble: The Diva that just wouldn’t stay dead (UofT Opera).
UPCOMING: Hadrian; Eugene Onegin (COC). ADDITIONAL: Director of Musical Studies at the University of Toronto Opera.

JONATHAN JOHNSON, Hervey (Tenor, Macon, GA, USA)
COC DEBUT: RECENT: Lensky, Eugene Onegin; Frederic, The Pirates of Penzance (Lyric Opera of Kansas City); Fenton, Falstaff (San Diego Opera); Rodrigue, Don Quichotte; Hylas, Les Troyens; Don Curzio, The Marriage of Figaro (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Lindoro, L’Italiana in Algeri (Portland Opera).
UPCOMING: Lucrancio, Ariodante (Lyric Opera of Chicago).

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STEPHEN LAWLESS. Director (Leeds, UK) COC CREDITS: Roberto Devereux (2014); Maria Stuarda (2010). RECENT: Der Rosenkavalier (Bolshoi Theatre); Rusalka (Theater Magdeburg); Rameau et Juliette (Gran Teatre del Liceu); La clemenza di Tito (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); The Marriage of Figaro (Opera Philadelphia/Palm Beach Opera/Minnesota Opera). UPCOMING: Roberto Devereux (San Francisco Opera); Kat’a Kabanova (Scottish Opera); Così fan tutte (Eisen).


ALLYSON MCHARDY. Smeton (Mezzo-soprano, Oshawa, ON) SELECT COC CREDITS: Julie Riel, Louis Riel (2017); Sara, Roberto Devereux (2014). RECENT: Julie Riel, Louis Riel (Festival l’Opéra de Québec); Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation (Toronto Symphony Orchestra); Ligeti’s Requiem (Seattle Symphony); Marguerite, La Damnation de Faust (Grant Park); Orsini, Lucrezia Borgia (Theater St. Gallen). UPCOMING: Céphise, Pygmalion; Junon, Actéon (Opéra Atelier); Dvorák’s Stabat Mater (Vancouver Symphony Orchestra).

SONDRA RADJANOVSKY. Anna Boleña (Soprano, Berwyn, Illinois, USA) SELECT COC CREDITS: Norma, Norma (2016); Elisabetta, Roberto Devereux (2014). RECENT: Amelia, A Masked Ball (Opéra national de Paris); Norma, Norma (Metropolitan Opera/Lyric Opera of Chicago); Tosca, Tosca (Los Angeles Opera/Royal Opera House, Covent Garden); Maddalena di Coigny, Andrea Cherrier (Gran Teatre del Liceu). UPCOMING: Leonora, il Trovatore (Opéra national de Paris); Elisabetta, Roberto Devereux (San Francisco Opera).

CORRADO ROVARIS. Conductor (Bergamo, Italy) COC CREDITS: Roberto Devereux (2014). RECENT: Written on Skin (Opera Philadelphia); Elizabeth Cree (Opera Philadelphia); Lucia di Lammermoor (Santa Fe Opera/Opéra national de Lorraine); The Barber of Seville (Opéra de Monte-Carlo); La Traviata (Opéra de Lausanne). UPCOMING: Lucia di Lammermoor (Opera Philadelphia); La clemenza di Tito (Opera Oviedo); L’Italiana in Algeri (Santa Fe Opera).

BRUCE SLEDGE. Lord Riccardo Percy (Tenor, Orange, CA, USA) COC CREDITS: Paolo Erizzo, Mefistofele II (2016). RECENT: Jean de Leyde, Le prophète (Deutsche Oper Berlin); Lorenzo, Der Kaufmann von Venedig and Macduff, Macbeth (Welsh National Opera); The Duke of Mantua, Rigoletto (Vancouver Opera and Santa Fe Opera); Roberto, Maria Stuarda (Royal Opera House of Muscat). UPCOMING: Bacchus, Ariadne auf Naxos (Santa Fe Opera).

REINHARD TRAUB. Lighting Designer (Graz, Austria) COC DEBUT. RECENT: Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk (Teatro di San Carlo); Macbeth, Il Turco in Italia, Rusalka (Bayerische Staatsoper); Don Pasquale, Parsifal, Don Giovanni, Madama Butterfly (Oper Stuttgart); Fidelio (Theater St Gallen); Idomeneo (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden); Arabella (Oper Frankfurt); Tristan und Isolde, Parsifal (Bayreuth Festival); Aida, Don Giovanni (Salzburg Festival); Lucia Silla (La Monnaie/De Mont); UPCOMING: Lohegrin, Tannhäuser, The Ring Cycle (Bayreuth Festival); I Puntani (Oper Stuttgart); Benvenuto (Oper Hamburg); Alcina, Euryanthe (Theater an der Wien); The Magic Flute (Staatsoper Berlin).

CHRISTIAN VAN HORN. Enrico (Bass-baritone, Rockville Centre, NY, USA) COC CREDITS: Escamillo, Carmen (2016); Colline, La Bohème (2013); Angelotti, Tosca (2012). RECENT: Mephistopheles, Faust (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Sprecher, Die Zauberflöte and Julio, The Exterminating Angel (Metropolitan Opera [Met]); Melisso, Alcina and Raimondo, Lucia di Lammermoor (Santa Fe Opera); Oroveso, Norma (Dallas Opera); the Four Villains, The Tales of Hoffmann (La Opera). UPCOMING: Mefistofele, Mefistofele (Met); Narbal, Les Troyens (Opéra National de Paris); Zoroastro, Orlando (San Francisco Opera).

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THE SOPRANOS

SONDRA RADVANOVSKY and KERI ALKEMA are rivals in Anna Bolena but the best of friends in real life. Here the sopranos interview each other before sharing the stage for the first time.

Keri interviews Sondra

How many roles have you sung now at the COC?
With this Anna Bolena, I will have sung four operas at the COC. But, there are MANY more to come, I promise you! This is a love affair that has just begun with the COC!

Are there any other dream roles on your wish list?
Honestly, there aren’t that many dream roles left for me to sing. I am lucky that I have ticked off so many on my wish list. But there are still a few left and they are: Turandot, Medea, Pique Dame, Macbeth, La forza del destino and, maybe someday, Cavalleria rusticana.

Is it different singing Tosca and, say, Verdi roles as opposed to singing bel canto?
Another really great question! And my answer is “Yes” and also “No.” “No” because, in many ways, it is the same technique used to sing both. If you think about it, Tosca, which is verismo opera, was born from bel canto. But then “Yes” because the big difference for me isn’t the technique of singing them differently, it is the size and VOLUME of the orchestra. Puccini uses vocal doubling, which is when the orchestra plays the same line that I am singing, and there are usually more instruments in the orchestra pit than with, say, Donizetti or maybe even Verdi.

Do you have a favourite story of you and me... at least one we can share with the public? ;)
Let me see... if it is a story about you and me it will either have to do with shopping or drinking too much wine! Hahaha! I can think of so many of them but I think I will go with the story of us ordering take-away Indian food in London. I think our eyes were larger than our stomachs. The food was just SO good that we had to finish it all and then afterwards I think we regretted eating so much of it that we had to undo our pants and lie on the floor for a good 30 minutes or else we were both going to be sick! Well, that and also Christmas shopping in London and going to the card store. Remember that? I think we laughed like true opera singers at the wooden plaque that arrived in the mail one day from which you read, “Alcohol... because no great story ever started with someone eating a salad!”

Any advice you have for the new generation of singers out there trying to start a career?
Yes, STUDY, STUDY, STUDY! Study vocal technique, study acting, study languages and watch and observe the generations before you... they were one generation closer to the composers who wrote what you are singing. But, honestly, I tell young singers that this is not an easy job and, quite frankly, the singing part of it should come naturally at some point. The hard parts are the grueling schedules, travel, singing consistently well, being away from your home and family, and trying not to get sick. You really MUST love this profession, or else don’t do it.

Also, I find it is SO important for young singers to learn about managing their finances and taxes. As a singer, your income comes in spurts normally and there can be months between pay cheques. And they must learn how to budget for those months when the bills still keep coming in but there is no income coming in. Whoever said singing was easy never tried doing a tax return of an international opera singer!
Do you consider Giovanna a mezzo role or a soprano role and do you think about it different vocally than other roles? You know what’s funny? I never thought it was a mezzo role! I just looked in the score now and it is listed as a mezzo. I have to laugh, because I have sung both Anna and Giovanna and Giovanna feels higher in my throat. She actually sits higher in the voice for a longer period of time than Anna. Anna has the range of the whole staff and when singing her, as you know, the stamina for the entire sing is what has to be planned. Giovanna doesn’t have to worry about stamina, she has to plan how she sings the majority of her role in the top part of her voice without the break/release of coming down.

What are your MUST travel essentials? And what is the hardest part of travelling for you? You will make fun of me, but I never leave home without my hair straightener and hair products. ;) Hardest part of travelling is being without Chris, my main squeeze.

Wanna share a funny story about us as friends? You know, I thought it was pretty funny that when we were just recently asked if we had a photo of the two of us together, we were both positive we did. Then when we looked through our own pics, we couldn’t find one! We realized that when we are together, we are having so much fun hanging out doing whatever we are doing that taking a pic is the last thing on our minds! I love that!!!

If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would it be? Anywhere people want to hear me sing.

Coffee or tea? Tea!! Lots of it, with milk and sugar.

Favourite comfort food? Favourite comfort food is always pasta, tomato sauce and cheese, cheese, cheese.

The last good book you read? The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt and How not to Die by Michael Greger

Donizetti or Stravinsky? Impossible to choose between the two. That would be like picking your favourite child.

Favourite wife of Henry VIII? Anna Bolena of course!

What always brings a smile to your face? My daughter always brings a smile to my face. She has a remarkable sense of humour and her resilience inspires me every day.

What’s your biggest guilty pleasure? I’ve said this before in a COC interview: cheese popcorn. This will likely never change.

Who are three people, alive or dead or fictional, that you would like to have dinner with? Who are three people, alive or dead or fictional, that you would like to have dinner with? I’d like to have dinner with my parents when they were teenagers, and Julia Child. She can do the cooking!

Who is an artist you’d give anything to perform with? Who is an artist you’d give anything to perform with? I’d love to perform with Alan Cumming. Maybe in a musical or even a play.

If you could sing any role outside your voice type, what would it be? If you could sing any role outside your voice type, what would it be? I would do anything to sing Elektra, probably because it was the first opera I ever saw and who doesn’t want to sing Strauss?

Do you have any pre- or post-performance rituals? I used to have all kinds of things I would do which were frankly quite superstitious. Once I became a mother that all just fell away. A good meal and some quiet time in my dressing room and I am ready for action.

What’s the best thing about being a singer? There are so many things about being a singer that are wonderful… the people you meet, the places you get to travel to, learning new roles, always having new experiences. What I’ve come to really value are the times when I can really live in the moment with the music when I’m singing. Everything else just falls away… Bliss!

What is the first thing you do when you arrive in a new city? When I arrive in a new city I let my family know I’ve arrived safely and then I walk around looking for a grocery store. I know… it’s all glamour when you’re on the road!

What is the first thing you do when you arrive back home? At home the first thing is to sit on the couch, catch up on all the family and neighbourhood news and have a lovely glass of Pinot Grigio.

What’s your favourite thing about Toronto? I grew up in Oshawa so Toronto was this big exotic city that we drove through on the way to Grandma and Grandpa’s house in Guelph. I always thought that someday I might be lucky enough to live there and be equally exotic. My favourite thing about Toronto is that I get to live here!

What the most important thing people should know about Anna Bolena and The Nightingale and Other Short Fables? The most important thing to know about any opera is that it is to be enjoyed… whatever that means to you.
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] Our winter production of *The Abduction from the Seraglio* was a real conversation starter this year. In February, we invited members from Friends of the COC, President’s Council, and Golden Circle to join the discussion with an artist roundtable featuring the cast, creative team and orchestra.

[2] This past January, President’s Council and Golden Circle members were invited to experience a working rehearsal dinner and chat for *The Abduction from the Seraglio* with special insights from director Wajdi Mouawad, COC General Director Alexander Neef and COC Music Director Johannes Debus.

[3] Soprano Claire de Sévigné melted hearts with her Valentine’s Day performance in our Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre. From September to May we present over 75 concerts. Check for up-to-date listings and sign up for e-mail updates at coc.ca/FreeConcerts.

[4] With sparkling lights overhead and a bird’s eye view of bustling Queen Street West, the Henry N.R. Jackman Lounge was the perfect spot for the Rigoletto opening night toast.

[5] When we say opera is for everyone, we mean everyone! Meet Bello, our new feathered friend. His owner tells us Bello loves opera so our free Opera Connect concert at First Canadian Place was a great chance to hear some live opera for the first time. Bello was enchanted by the music, and here he got up close and personal with tenor Joshua Guerrero, who sang at the concert before his run of performances as the Duke in Rigoletto.

[6] The cast, creative team, staff and donors gathered to celebrate Rigoletto’s opening night, a great first performance and a look ahead to many more.

[7] Detail, details, details. Thanks to the expert eye of Natassia Brunato in our costume department, COC Chorus mezzo-soprano Susan Black is all set for the Nightingale stage.

[8] No filters needed for Sharon Ryman, our wig and makeup supervisor! This March, our Opera Club members went behind the scenes for a close-up look at the props, costumes, and wigs that bring *Anna Bolena* and *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables* to life.

[9] Costume co-ordinator Chloe Anderson shows us exactly how one might “dress to impress” in the court of Henry VIII.

[10] The sky’s the limit for these students! They took part in an opera creation program in Etobicoke, where they wrote, designed and performed an entire superhero opera.

[11] In January, members of the 2017 Orchestra Academy took part in a roundtable discussion with our Artist-in-Residence, soprano Jane Archibald. A couple of days later they gave a concert in the Free Concert Series, along with artists from the Ensemble Studio and the COC Orchestra.
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Robert Carsen’s celebrated production will be seen and heard in Toronto for the first time.

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Christine Goerke returns to perform the title role in Richard Strauss riveting family psychodrama.

COSÌ FAN TUTTE
Mozart
FEB 5 – 23, 2019
Mozart’s ingenious comedy of fidelity and temptation features two of today’s most pre-eminent young Canadian voices, Kirsten MacKinnon and Emily D’Angelo.

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One of opera’s greatest love stories, and one of the COC’s most popular productions returns to the mainstage.

LA BOHÈME
Puccini
APR 17 – MAY 22, 2019

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Verdi’s late-career masterpiece is presented in a new production with an incomparable cast led by Russell Thomas, Gerald Finley, and Tamara Wilson.

OTELLO
Verdi
APRIL 17 – MAY 21, 2019
From one of Canada’s pre-eminent sopranos to the opera singers of tomorrow—Sheila K. Piercey is paying it forward.

Soprano Sheila K. Piercey dazzled COC audiences from 1958 to 1971 with her “natural vivacity and her clear, flexible, rich voice” (The Canadian Encyclopedia). An avid supporter of the arts, Sheila is now making dreams come true for young Canadian artists with the Sheila K. Piercey Fund, a generous endowment established in support of the COC Ensemble Studio. This fund, along with an operating gift, is ensuring that there will be resources in place for years to come to train, develop and empower the next generation of Canadian opera stars—opportunities that did not exist when Sheila was an emerging artist.

Born in Halifax, Sheila was introduced to music at a young age. Her mother, Lilian Piercey, an accomplished pianist, organist and vocalist, was Sheila’s first musical mentor. Sheila continued music studies with baritone and choral conductor Leonard Mayoh and made her operatic debut in 1954 as the Mother in Amahl and the Night Visitors. Over the next two years, she performed extensively in Nova Scotia, affirming her commitment to establishing a professional career in opera.

Offered a scholarship from the Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto opera program, Sheila moved to Toronto in 1956 and studied under Ernesto Vinci, a fellow east-coaster. Her voice charmed Toronto audiences in CBC Opera’s Peter Grimes (1959), Jenůfa (1957), and the title role in Stravinsky’s The Nightingale (1957).

As the Dew Fairy in Humperdinck’s Hansel and Gretel in 1958, Sheila made her role debut with the Canadian Opera Company—marking the beginning of a long-lasting relationship that spanned 22 mainstage roles and 16 COC tours over 13 years. A gifted performer, especially in comedic and soubrette parts, Sheila’s roles at the COC included Adèle in Die Fledermaus, Rosina in The Barber of Seville, Norina in Don Pasquale, and Mimì in La Bohème, among others.

Canadian mezzo-soprano Janet Stubbs describes the inspiring effect that Sheila had on young singers: “As a young mezzo-soprano I made the decision to pursue a career in opera after attending a dress rehearsal of the COC’s The Merry Widow. One of the soloists in that cast was Sheila K. Piercey. The memory of her striking presence has remained with me ever since.”

Moving back to Nova Scotia in 1971, Sheila’s philanthropic legacy began in the form of teaching. From 1977 to 1982, she taught voice at Dalhousie University—igniting a passion for helping young singers unlock their artistic potential. She has continued this work through charitable activities, supporting the construction of the Sheila K. Piercey Rehearsal Hall and two voice studios at Dalhousie University—the Ernesto Vinci Vocal Studio and the Leonard and Doris Mayoh Vocal Studio—named in honour of the mentors who helped shape her career.

Sheila has been a vital supporter of the Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts in Halifax and has developed scholarships for young artists, like the Sheila K. Piercey Collaborative Pianist Awards, which provides six vocal students each year with bursaries to cover the costs of hiring an accompanist for auditions and performances.

Sheila’s remarkable gift to the COC Ensemble Studio ensures that the next generation of great Canadian singers and pianists will have unparalleled access to comprehensive mentorship at one of North America’s best opera houses—from mainstage performance opportunities, to master classes with some of the world’s best artists, to one-on-one coaching.

Thanks to Sheila’s visionary contribution, the Ensemble Studio will continue to be a crucial launching pad for young singers with big dreams. An exemplary champion of the art form, Sheila K. Piercey is helping to build a culture of Canadian opera that will thrive today and in the future.

Taylor Long is the COC’s Advancement Communications Officer.
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Spring programming includes solo recitals by Owen McCausland, tenor (April 17); Miles Mykkanen, tenor (April 19); Sondra Radvanovsky, soprano (May 1); Keri Alkema, soprano (May 22); Artists of the COC Ensemble Studio (April 18, April 26, May 3); and Artists of the COC Orchestra (May 15).

For complete listings, and to sign up for e-mail updates, visit coc.ca/FreeConcerts
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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 BABIES-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.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE
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.

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 foursseasoncentre.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 foursseasoncentre.ca or call 416-342-5233.

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

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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 5 p.m. or through first intermission

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