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La Traviata 2019 Kijong Wi - Alfredo Beth Hagerman -Violetta Photo Credit: Dahlia Katz

WELCOME TO TORONTO CITY OPERA



Les Contes d'Hoffmann 2020, Photo Credit : Cylla von Tiedemann

We are Toronto's longest running opera company - continuously since 1946. TCO was founded as an Opera Workshop program in collaboration with the Toronto School Board. In 1967 Giuseppe Macina became Artistic Director and transformed the program to perform fully staged productions as Toronto Opera Repertoire. In 1980 Toronto City Opera was incorporated as a registered charity. Giuseppe Macina retired in 2013 and in 2017 we became an independent opera company separate from the school board, fully in control of our destiny.

Our Mission

Toronto City Opera is passionately committed to opera for everyone. We give early-career professionals an opportunity to perform principal roles. We give our amateur choristers inspiration and skills so that they too can perform in a fully staged opera. And for our community we provide affordable access to this grand synthesis of music, drama, dance, and design.

We believe the classic opera repertoire continues to inspire and delight audiences and performers from diverse cultures. Our ambition is to engage contemporary audiences through the timeless appeal of these works, not to preserve them as museum pieces. We fulfill their creators' intentions, in collaboration with creative stage directors, by performing the works as written while presenting fresh, original, live productions that enthrall our community with their artistic truth.

Our Artistic Vision

Our Program

Each year we plan to present at least 2 fully staged operas. The very generous support of our donors, together with government Covid relief funding, enabled us to pivot to digital during the pandemic and return to live performance for the first time in 2 years. Join us on our journey and stay up to date on future events by signing up at torontocityopera.com



RICHARD PARADISO GENERAL DIRECTOR

As a director and advisor on boards along with years in charitable arts management, Richard brings to TCO his experience of focusing on innovative solutions to strategy challenges.

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NABUCCO SYNOPSIS

DR. MARGARET CORMIER

ACT I: JERUSALEM

The Temple of Solomon, Jerusalem

The Babylonian army, led by King Nabucco, is laying siege to the city of Jerusalem. The Israelites have taken refuge within the Temple. Zaccaria, the High Priest, reassures the Israelites; he has with him a valuable hostage, Nabucco's daughter Fenena, with whom he hopes to broker peace with Babylon. Zaccaria entrusts Fenena to Ismaele, unaware that Ismaele and Fenena are in love. Ismaele had previously been a prisoner of the Babylonians and Fenena had helped him escape. The lovers attempt to flee the Temple, but Abigaille, Nabucco's other daughter, appears and apprehends them. Abigaille threatens to kill the lovers but tells Ismaele that if he returns her love, she will protect him and his people. Ismaele refuses. Babylonian soldiers storm the Temple, and when Nabucco appears, Zaccaria threatens to kill Fenena if he desecrates the holy ground. Ismaele intervenes to save Fenena, and Nabucco orders the destruction of the Temple.

ACT II: THE IMPIOUS ONE

Scene 1 - The royal apartments, Babylon

The Israelites are prisoners at the palace in Babylon. Nabucco is away with his army, and in his absence, he has entrusted Fenena with the captives. Abigaille has discovered a document containing evidence that she is not Nabucco's daughter, and that her real parents were slaves. She is furious and deeply jealous of Fenena, who has Nabucco's trust and Ismaele's love. The High Priest of Bel warns Abigaille that Fenena is going to release the prisoners and urges Abigaille to seize power from her sister. He has already started a rumour that Nabucco died in battle, leaving the throne empty.

Scene 2 - A room in the palace

Zaccaria learns that Fenena has converted to Judaism, and the Israelites forgive Ismaele for his betrayal now that Fenena is a Hebrew. A Babylonian soldier tells Fenena that Nabucco is dead and warns her about Abigaille's rebellion. Abigaille enters with the High Priest and demands that Fenena hand over the crown. Suddenly Nabucco, back from the battlefield, appears and seizes the crown for himself, declaring himself not only king – but God! He orders the death of the Israelites, and Fenena tells him she has converted and will share in their fate. Nabucco is furious and demands that Fenena obey him, claiming again that he is God.





ACT II: THE IMPIOUS ONE

Scene 2 - A room in the palace, con't

In a crash of lightning and thunder, the crown is lifted off his head by a supernatural force and Nabucco is struck mad. Zaccaria pronounces that this is a heavenly punishment and Abigaille takes the crown for herself.

ACT III: THE PROPHECY

Scene 1 - The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Abigaille, supported by the priests of Bel, rules in Babylon. The High Priest of Bel presents her with a death warrant for the Israelite prisoners, including Fenena. Abigaille manipulates Nabucco, who is confused and suggestible, into signing the warrant. Upon realizing he has sentenced his daughter to death, Nabucco is distraught. He tries to reveal to Abigaille that she is not his child, but she mocks him and tears up the evidence. Nabucco pleads for Abigaille to spare Fenena's life, but Abigaille is unmoved.

Scene 2 - *The banks of the River Euphrates*

The Israelites sing a hymn lamenting their lost homeland. Zaccaria again tells them to have faith in God, and he prophesies the fall of Babylon.

ACT IV: THE BROKEN IDOL

Scene 1 - *The royal apartments, Babylon*

Nabucco sees Fenena in chains on her way to be executed, and in desperation, he prays to the God of Israel and asks for forgiveness. He promises to rebuild the Temple and convert to Judaism. His madness is lifted and his loyal soldiers happily release him from his captivity.

Scene 2 - The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

The prisoners are led toward the sacrificial altar and Fenena prepares for death. Nabucco enters with his soldiers, declares he will rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem, and orders the destruction of the idol of Bel. At his word, the idol miraculously falls to the ground and shatters. Nabucco tells the Israelites they are free and all join in a prayer to Jehovah. Abigaille enters, having poisoned herself at God's command. She begs for forgiveness, prays for God's mercy, and dies. Zaccaria proclaims Nabucco the servant of God and king of kings.

THE JOURNEY TO NABUCCO

DR MARGARET CORMIER

NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY: HISTORY TO SCRIPTURE TO OPERA



WILLIAM BLAKE,
NEBUCHADNEZZAR, C.
1795—1805, TATE
BRITAIN

Nebuchadnezzar II was the second king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire and oversaw a period of great prosperity. During Nebuchadnezzar's reign, the Levant, including the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel, was the epicentre of competition between Babylon and Egypt, and both powers were keen to assert their imperial dominance in the region. Nebuchadnezzar captured the city of Jerusalem in 598 BCE. Several years later, the ruler Nebuchadnezzar had installed in Jerusalem allied with Egypt and rebelled against Babylonian authority. Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to the Kingdom of Judah between 589 and 587 BCE, destroying Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon. Most of the city's elite were taken into captivity in Babylon where they remained until the fall of the empire in 539 BCE.

The Old Testament tells the story of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem and calls him a "destroyer of nations" (Jeremiah). The Book of Daniel also contains stories about the Babylonian captivity. In it, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that reveals his own fate: he will lose his mind for seven years and live like a wild beast. His kingdom and his sanity will be restored when he understands his humility before God.

Temistocle Solera based his libretto for Nabucco on Old Testament sources as well as an 1836 play and ballet by Auguste Anicet-Bourgeois and Francis Cornu. Nabucco's madness represented in the opera differs significantly from biblical and historical accounts. Whereas in the Book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar's madness lasts for seven years, in the opera it lasts for only one act. But there is no historical evidence that Nebuchadnezzar was mad at all. The account in the Book of Daniel seems to combine two Neo-Babylonian kings into one: Nebuchadnezzar, who led the destruction of Jerusalem, and Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian empire, who was rumoured to be mad.

CREATIVE TEAM



JENNIFER TUNG - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Artistic director of Toronto City Opera and assistant conductor of the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra, conductor Jennifer Tung leads a uniquely versatile career as music director, collaborative pianist, and soprano. In 2020/21, she joins Tapestry Opera as a conducting fellow in the inaugural year of the Women in Musical Leadership program, in partnership with Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Pacific Opera Victoria. Jennifer debuted with the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival conducting The Mikado in 2017 and has returned to conduct Sweeney Todd and Tragedy of Carmen. In 2019, she debuted with Opera York in La Traviata and assisted Tapestry Opera and Opera on the Avalon's joint production of the Dora Award winning opera Shanawdithit by Dean Burry and Yvette Nolan. Jennifer is on faculty at Toronto's Glenn Gould School, and is a soughtafter faculty member for summer programs internationally. She holds degrees in vocal performance and collaborative piano from the Eastman School of Music and studies conducting with Maestro Denis Mastromonaco.

SUZANNE YEO - ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR

Conductor, pianist and vocal coach Suzanne Yeo has performed in North America, Europe and Asia, to much praise for the intensity and sensitivity of her interpretations. After a stint as a doctoral candidate in the German department at Princeton University, she returned to music and obtained her M.Mus. in piano performance from the University of Toronto. Her long-standing affinity for opera and Lieder led her to the sphere of collaborative piano, where, in addition to working with singers, she also participated in various collaborative piano workshops with Emily Hamper and Steven Philcox, and acted as répétiteur at the Miami Music Festival in 2019. She is also one of the co-founders (and resident pianist) of Opera Sustenida, an opera collective noted for its wittily modern takes on the standard repertoire. At the same time, she has continued to study conducting with David Bowser, and also in workshops, such as Jan Harrington's choral/orchestral conducting masterclass at the Princeton Festival, where she made her public début as an orchestral conductor. She was also the assistant onductor at the University of Toronto-affiliated Hart House Chorus from 2015-2017.



IVAN JOVANOVIC - MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ivan Jovanovic's music education began in Serbia at the Belgrade Faculty of Music where he completed his BMus and MMus in piano performance. In 2004, he joined Belgrade Opera Orchestra as a répétiteur and concert pianist. In 2013 he's coming to Toronto to complete his MMus. in Collaborative Piano from the University of Toronto under the professorship of Steven Philcox. The same year he won prestigious Gwendolyn Williams Koldofsky Prize in Accompanying. Presently, he is a regular vocal coach and harpsichordist in UofT's Early Music Department.

From 2014 to present, Jovanovic has been the accompanist at Toronto City Opera and in 2017 extended his role to Music Director.



CRISTINA PISANI ABIGAILLE



MICHAEL ROBERT-BRODER
NABUCCO



DYLAN WRIGHT
ZACCARIA

Cristina Pisani is a vibrant soprano hailing from Mississauga. She enjoys a multifaceted career on both the operatic and concert stage and is thrilled to make her mainstage Toronto City Opera debut as the feisty Abigaille in Verdi's Nabucco. Other credits include roles in operas by Handel, Mozart, Donizetti, Bizet, Verdi, Wagner, Leoncavallo, Puccini, Strauss, Britten, and Beckett. Cristina began her musical training at the age of three and completed her MMus at Western University. In the few hours she is away from music, Cristina loves to dabble in makeup and spend time with her family, friends, and pets

Based in Toronto, Canadian baritone Michael Robert-Broder has been praised as a singer equally at home with art song, oratorio, and opera.

As a concert singer, Michael has been heard across
Canada in oratorio and concert works from
Monteverdi, to presentations of new works by emerging composers. He has performed all of the major works by JS Bach, including a staged presentation of the Matthew Passion, and is currently involved in an ongoing Cantata cycle at Church of the Redeemer in Toronto.

On the lyric stage, he has recently portrayed the roles of Scarpia in Tosca, Il Conte in Le Nozze di Figaro,
Sprecher in Die Zauberflöte,
Duke Bluebeard, Peter in Hansel and Gretel, and Don Pizarro in Fidelio.

Originally from Calgary, AB, bass-baritone Dylan Wright has been praised for "seducing the audience with his rich. sonorous voice" (Beat Magazine). He recently sang Leporello in Highlands Opera Studio's 'Don Giovanni', Fasolt and Hagen in Berlin Wagner Gruppe and Opera by Request's concert production of Wagner's Ring Cycle, the Bonze and the Imperial Commissioner in Windsor Symphony Orchestra's 'Madama Butterfly', the four Villains in Toronto City Opera's 'Les Contes D'Hoffmann', and created the roles of Sherman Booth and Thomas Montgomery in the new opera 'Joshua' by Colin Mendez Morris with ArsMusica.



COREY ARNOLD
ISMAELE - NOV 13



LAUREN ESTEY
ANNA



LILLIAN BROOKS

Tenor and Composer, Corey Arnold, is a semi-finalist of the 2021 Vincero World Opera Competition, a 2020 Laureate of the Jeunes Ambassadeurs Lyriques, and a semi-finalist of the 2020 International Singing Competition of Marmande. He has sung in over 30 opera productions in Canada, the United States, and Italy, with concerts in Mexico as well. Recent performances include: Calaf in Turandot, with Opera by Request, Romeo in Romeo et Juliette, with Pellegrini Opera, and II Duca in Rigoletto, with Southern Ontario Lyric Opera. As a composer, he has written two musicals and two operas, and is currently working on a third opera.

Soprano Lauren Estey fell in love with opera as a young chorister with Opera New Brunswick. Lauren completed her BMus at Dalhousie University with Professor Marcia Swanston where she was featured as Lauretta in Puccini's Gianni Schicchi and Belinda/Sorceress in Purcell's Dido and Aeneas. Lauren continued her vocal studies receiving a MMus of Vocal Performance at the University of Western Ontario with Professor Rachel Mallon. Lauren currently resides in Toronto, Ontario where she continues to develop her craft at the University of Toronto. This year, Lauren received the honourable mention in UofT's annual DMA Recital Competition. In 2022. Lauren looks forward to performing Lola in Mascagni's Cavalleria rusticana with TCO.

Canadian mezzo-soprano Lillian Brooks, praised for her "legato, lyric sound" (Ludwig van Toronto), and "easy handling of coloratura" (Schmopera), has appeared in many operatic roles and as an oratorio soloist throughout Canada. Her past operatic roles include Bradamante in Alcina, Third Lady in Mozart's The Magic Flute, Flora in La Traviata, and Cherubino in Le nozze di Figaro. Lillian has enjoyed 2 exciting years with Calgary Opera as a member of their Emerging Artist Program during their 2019/20 and 2020/21 seasons. She appeared as The Mother in Amahl and the Night Visitors, Hansel in Hansel & Gretel, and was scheduled to perform the role of Beatrice in Beatrice et Benedict (cancelled due to Covid 19). This season, Lillian can be seen singing the role of Fenena in Toronto City Opera's Nabucco, as well as rejoining Chorus Niagara for their semi-annual performance of Handel's Messiah.



DAEVYD PEPPER
ISMAFLE - NOV 19



KYLE MCDONALD
GRAN SACERDOTE



ALVARO VAZQUEZ ABDALLO

Canadian Tenor Daevyd
Pepper is a graduate of
the University of Toronto
Opera school and an
alumnus of prestigious
training programs such
as Opera Theatre of
Saint Louis, Vancouver
Opera, Calgary Opera
and the Chautauqua
Summer Voice Festival.

Daevyd is known for his performances as Male Chorus, Johnny Inkslinger, Lenski, Ferrando & Scaramuccio. As a champion of new music, he also debuted the lead role of Addison Witless in the world's first zombie opera Prima Zombie.

Kyle is excited to be joining TCO for the first time! Some of his other recent roles are: Basilio in The Barber of Seville, James Bond in James Bond: A Convenient Lie. Friar Laurence in Romeo et Juliette, and Timur in Turandot. In the world of film and television he's appeared as Courtney Van Doren on Murdoch Mysteries, and in voice over, he can be found as the Scotiabank popcorn astronaut in Cineplex Theatres. Upcoming roles include Richard I in the world premiere of The Lion Heart (March 2022), a new opera (music by Corey Arnold, book by Kyle), and Conan in the world premiere of Conan and the Stone of Kelior (May 2022), a new action/adventure opera created from existing hits - hear your favourite song again for the first time! kylemcdonald.org. @kyledmcdonald on instagram.

Mexican Tenor Alvaro Vazquez graduated from the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto obtaining a Voice performance diploma.

Alvaro performed the role of Ajax II from the opera La Belle Helene for the school's annual spring opera conducted by Uri Mayer at Koerner Hall. He was cast as the Miller, the lead role in the opera El Gato con Botas by Xavier Monsalvatge for the Glenn Gould School Fall Opera conducted by Peter Tiefenbach.

He made his debut with Mississauga Symphony Orchestra and Opera York singing the role of El Remendado from the opera Carmen by Bizet conducted by Denis Mastromonaco. Most recently he performed for the Windermere village festival of the arts in Muskoka as a Tenor soloist in a recital of Opera, Zarzuela and Art Song and sang Gastone in Opera York's and Mississauga Symphony Orchestra production of La Traviata.



Dr. Margaret Cormier is a musicologist and opera dramaturg based in Toronto. Her forthcoming monograph interrogates representations of sexual violence on the twenty-first-century operatic stage through a feminist ethical framework.

She holds a Bachelor of Music with Honours in Voice Performance and a Master of Arts in Musicology from Western University and recently completed her PhD at McGill. Margaret has presented research on operatic production and staging practices at conferences around the world and, in recent years, has been active as a public musicologist and dramaturg on Toronto's opera scene



Fidelio 2017, TCO Chorus

The Toronto City Opera Chorus

Soprano 1

Kemi Atawo Caroline Miller Sherily De Silva Heather Pike Linda Gruson Nada Savicevic Carol Jackson Sandra Tang Andrea Johnston Kathy Wert Vivien Mann

Soprano 2

Hengameh Ataie Marianne Elizabeth Berton- Netchitailo

Beverly Gibson Margaret Oldfield Karen Johnston Isabel Ramchandani Hunter Vanessa Quinn Heather McGrath Mary Joan Walker

Alto

Isabel Mazzotta Rianna Robinson

Tenor

Adam Brown William Cahoon Stephen Jackson Chris Lea Brunot Nseke

Baritone

Art Grierson Jeffrey Reitz

Bass

Don Maudsley Rob Maxwell James Phelan Henry Tang

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AND PRODUCTION TEAM FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS CONCERT.



Les Contes d'Hoffmann 2020, Ryan Harper (Hofffmann), Chad Quigley(Luther), Tony Bittar-Sayegh, (Nathanael), TCO chorus

Photo Credit : Cylla von Tiedemann

Special thanks to:

Peoples Theatre Production Team Opera Sustenida

Additional thanks to:

Amanda Eason for costumes

Joseph Pepelnak for rehearsal recording

Dr. Margaret Cormier for the synopsis and history

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Les Contes d'Hoffmann 2020, Nicole Dubinsky (Olympia), Tony Bittar-Sayegh (Spalanzani) Photo Credit : Cylla von Tiedemann

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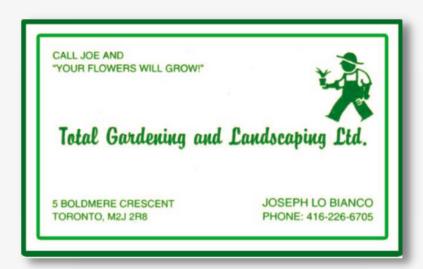
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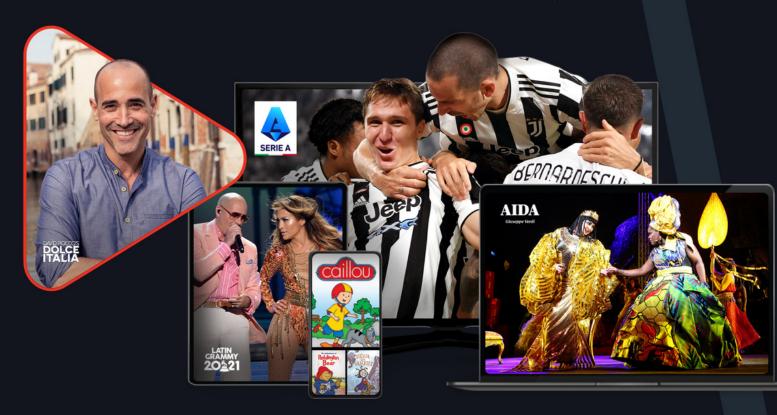
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Le Nozze di Figaro 2018, Lillian Brooks (Cherubino), Peter Bass (Count), Brittany Rae (Susanna), Jeffrey Smith (Basilio) TCO chorus

Photo Credit: Dahlia Katz

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We are a charitable, non-profit organization run by a volunteer board of directors. As with all performing arts organizations, box office revenue is not enough. Our fundraisers and private donations contribute more than 1/3 of the revenues we need to mount our productions. Our administration costs are only 3% of our expenses. You can be sure your donation goes directly to supporting the artists and productions.

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- 1.E-transfer to treasurer@torontocityopera.com
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