PROGRAMME

40 YEARS OF CROW'S THEATRE

TAPESTRY OPERA

ROCKING HORSE WINNER

COMPOSED BY **GARETH WILLIAMS**
LIBRETTO BY **ANNA CHATTERTON**
DIRECTED BY **MICHAEL HIDETOSHI MORI**

A TAPESTRY OPERA PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH CROW'S THEATRE

ROCKING HORSE WINNER

COMPOSED BY **GARETH WILLIAMS**
LIBRETTO BY **ANNA CHATTERTON**
DIRECTED BY **MICHAEL HIDETOSHI MORI**
CONDUCTED BY **KAMNA GUPTA**

NOVEMBER 1 TO 12, 2023 | GULOIEN THEATRE
OPENING NIGHT: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2023
EIGHT PERFORMANCES ONLY!

THE COMPANY

THE CAST

ASITHA TENNEKOON	PAUL
LUCIA CESARONI	AVA
PETER MCGILLIVRAY	BASSETT
KEITH KLASSEN	OSCAR
MIDORI MARSH	THE HOUSE
ALEX HETHERINGTON	THE HOUSE
ANIKA VENKATESH	THE HOUSE
KORIN THOMAS-SMITH	THE HOUSE

AYSEL TAGHI-ZADA	VIOLIN
TANYA CHARLES IVENIUK	VIOLIN
BRENNA MCLANE	VIOLA
SYBIL SHANAHAN	CELLO
STÉPHANE MAYER	RÉPÉTITEUR / PIANO

THE CREATIVE TEAM

GARETH WILLIAMS	COMPOSER
ANNA CHATTERTON	LIBRETTIST
MICHAEL HIDETOSHI MORI	DIRECTOR
KAMNA GUPTA	MUSIC DIRECTOR
郝邦宇 **STEVEN HAO**	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
***MING WONG**	COSTUME DESIGNER
ECHO ZHOU 周芷會	LIGHTING DESIGNER
JAWON KANG	SET DESIGNER (BASED ON ORIGINAL DESIGNS BY CAMELLIA KOO)
CARLOS VARELA	PRODUCTION MANAGER
MICAH CHAMPAGNE	PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
MYRA A. MALLEY	STAGE MANAGER
TAMARA VUCKOVIC	ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
KATHLEEN JOHNSON	HEAD OF WARDROBE
JINGYI ZHOU	SURTITLIST

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Crow's Theatre is a proud member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). We engage professional artists under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement (CTA) with the Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA).

Tapestry Opera is a proud member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT), the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA), and the Association for Opera in Canada (AOC). We engage professional artists under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement (CTA) with the Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA) and professional musicians under the General Theatre Agreement (GTA) of the Canadian Federation of Musicians (CFM) through the Toronto Musicians' Association (TMA).

*Indicated designers are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, IATSE Local ADC659.

Running Time of Rocking Horse Winner is 60 minutes without intermission.

Audience Advisory: Rocking Horse Winner contains a character's death, a dysfunctional mother-son relationship, and gambling. Some sequences are dark and shadowy.

WELCOME FROM CROW'S

Welcome to *ROCKING HORSE WINNER*, a Tapestry Opera production in association with Crow's Theatre's landmark 2023.24 40th anniversary season.

We're honoured to welcome Tapestry Opera's award-winning *ROCKING HORSE WINNER* to Streetcar Crowsnest for an exclusive eight-show run. Tapestry Opera has just celebrated a 40th anniversary of its own, having been founded in 1979, a few years before Crow's. Over the last four decades, Tapestry Opera has established itself as the country's most breathtaking and risk-taking producers of new Canadian opera. Led by Artistic and General Director, Michael Hidetoshi Mori, and Executive Director, Jaime Martino, the company continues to push contemporary opera into exciting new spaces and new communities. We're grateful to have them here with us at Crow's.

For four decades, Crow's Theatre has been a vessel for stories that challenge, inspire, and connect us. From its beginnings in Toronto's early indie-theatre scene in the 80s, under the leadership of Jim Millan, to the thriving institution it is today, Crow's remains first and foremost dedicated to creating unforgettable theatrical experiences. Throughout the decades, we have produced, toured, and presented countless iconic productions, and with each of them, we've aimed to create a space where our shared experiences meet powerful artistic expression.

Thank you for joining us at Crow's Theatre, in our East End home. We couldn't do any of this without you!

With immense appreciation,

ARTISTIC NOTES FROM TAPESTRY

CREATORS NOTES

When Gareth proposed adapting D.H. Lawrence's The Rocking Horse Winner, the short story instantly captured Anna's imagination. Gareth particularly loved that the house whispers to Paul (the protagonist of the story), a clear singing opportunity. In a world where communication has broken down, where characters are distant from one another, and where no one is reaching out to the people around them, singing is the only option. In a world where a boy hears a house whispering to him through the cracks, doors, ceilings, and floors, it's an easy conceptual jump to make - that we, the audience, might hear that whispering too and that it might turn into singing.

We could see that the story could be distilled down and yet also expanded to tell a moving tale about greed, entitlement, and a complicated relationship between mother and son. Anna was particularly struck by the plight of the mother character (Ava in our opera), a woman who cannot feel love for her children and is deeply unhappy. It is a brutally honest yet compassionate portrayal of a woman who is frozen in her own life.

The disconnect between Ava and her son Paul creates a deeply complex and complicated relationship. Paul is extremely sensitive and feels desperate to fill the void he feels between them. Only he (and the audience) can hear the house that sings to him, but it is no lullaby. Ava and Paul both have very powerful yet very flawed personalities that burn bright and then ultimately meet their demise by their own follies.

We felt the relationship between the mother and Paul would be stronger and more contemporary if he were in his early twenties, still living at home and riding his childhood rocking horse.

Anna was also intrigued by the concept of longing and feeling unlucky. She believes longing is a feeling that can be inherited and is a very powerful motivating factor. Entitlement and greed are also undeniably a part of the story, themes that this contemporary city - and those who live within it - will no doubt recognize.

Together, words, characters, and original story intertwined, our opera races forward with a pounding heart.

ANNA CHATTERTON AND **GARETH WILLIAMS**

DIRECTOR NOTES

Ava, an upper-class mother, struggles with parenting a grown son who is “so young.” DH Lawrence wrote the original story The Rocking Horse Winner in post-Great War England, a time which proved to be the singular most transformative in the changing fortunes of the classes in Great Britain. The working class came into unprecedented power and influence in such a condensed period that the wealthy, who did not adapt, did not see their fortunes survive. In Rocking Horse Winner, the house is a false sanctuary for Ava to the winds of change outside of it. Her tragedy is due to being stuck in ideas of the past and believing the solution to misfortune is luck, not love.

All of the adults, Ava, Oscar, his uncle, and Bassett, the caretaker, experience elements of empathy for Paul’s situation or at the least, know what the right thing to do is, but they all ultimately embrace avenues that prioritize themselves and their greed, given any minor kind of excuse combined with the opportunity for making easy money. It’s a cautionary tale that parallels how much bigger tragedies are not perpetrated by coordinated ‘evil’ but rather by the inaction of many.

And yet, there is great beauty and mystery in this opera. The idea that obsession and love might manifest magic is fascinating. Paul’s love… and composer Gareth Williams’ brilliant way of characterizing it in music gives us hope and light, so thoughtfully contrasted with Ava’s indulgent yet sparse musical settings. Perhaps the fact that any individual intervention of care could avoid this tragedy can serve as a reminder that the impact of good acts can never be underestimated.

MICHAEL HIDETOSHI MORI

TAPESTRY OPERA LEADERSHIP NOTES

When Rocking Horse WInner premiered in 2016, Tapestry Opera was in a state of flux and uncertainty, two and a half years into Michael Hidetoshi Mori’s new tenure as Artistic Director. The production was built on goodwill and hustle, favours from friends, and brilliant collaborators; the result is a lush, gorgeous, and unforgettable show. Deceptively simple, Anna Chatterton’s libretto wends its way into your heart, pinned down and held there by Gareth Williams’ inimitable score. This show was the beginning of great things for lead Asitha Tennekoon, Michael as Director, and Tapestry Opera as a company to remember. After a stalled 2020 remount, we could not be happier to bring this production - a personal favourite of Executive Director Jaime Martino - back to our lives.

SCENE SYNOPSIS

Rocking Horse Winner primarily explores the relationship between Paul, a young adult, and his emotionally distant mother, Ava.

Paul is driven to bridge the relationship with his mother, but Ava sees Paul's attempts to engage as fussy and considers motherhood an obligation. She remains distant, trapped in a materialistic reverie. Driven into poverty by "bad luck," Ava longs for past luxuries, and her gloom pervades the house to the point where the walls whisper in Paul's ear.

Paul assures his mother that he's lucky and he'll fix their bad luck himself. He runs upstairs to ride his rocking horse, which he thinks will help him. As he rides, he enters a trance, calling out a mysterious name.

Paul's uncle Oscar hears the noise and enters the room. An exhausted Paul tells Oscar the rocking horse has a new name every week; last week, his name was Blue Peter. Oscar realizes this was the winner of last week's horse race and offhandedly asks Paul for betting tips for today's race. Paul answers far too firmly for it to be guesswork. Sensing the possibility but needing proof, Oscar calls in the caretaker, Bassett, and the three head to the upcoming race.

Doubt turns to awe and then to excitement as Oscar and Bassett discover Paul isn't guessing but predicting the winning horses. The cash starts rolling in for everyone. Oscar can stop lying about his poverty, Bassett can quit his job, and Paul can finally make his mother happy but insists his part in things stay hidden.

However, it's not enough for Ava. She spends it as fast as Paul makes it, filling their home with more and more. The house joins in, asking for increasing amounts of decoration and decadence. Paul rides his rocking horse again and again, sometimes long into the night, desperate to make her happy and to stop the house from singing in his ears.

After one last ride, Paul predicts the winner of the biggest race of the season. Oscar and Bassett bet everything, and Paul has made everyone incredibly rich. And yet, his mother remains unhappy. Desperate, drained, barely alive, he climbs one last time on the horse, and dies alone.

MUSIC DESCRIPTION

It's best to describe Rocking Horse Winner's music using the opening line of the show: "nothing is as it should be."

This is not to say it's incorrect; far from it. Rather, it is intense and masterful at creating exactly what the drama calls for, which is often a sense of unease and foreboding. DH Lawrence's story is famous; many will know the ending before setting foot in the theatre. Thus, Gareth Williams' music purposefully haunts the ear, just as Ava's need for more haunts her family, reflecting each character's psyche as if through an antique mirror.

There is a reminiscence of Debussy's treatment of text, and the usage of certain motivic elements (particularly one tone cluster) serves to ground the soundscape. There are flavours of minimalism, ala Glass, Reich, and Pärt, joined to ethereal moments, complex rhythmic sections, and engaging melodies.

The result is a textural feast made of both gossamer and granite.

Opening Scene - A waltz.

Scene 1 - Ava at the Piano
The waltz is cut short. Ava discloses how far she's fallen and how difficult she finds caring for her son.

Scene 2 - Ava and Paul Talk About Luck
Paul is curious about why he and his mother don't have a car, and Ava explains it's because they're poor. Paul again asks why that's so, and Ava states it's because his father has no luck. Paul announces that he is lucky.

Scene 3 - Paul Rides His Rocking Horse
Paul creeps upstairs and rides his rocking horse, asking it to take him to where luck is. He rides faster and faster and, at the peak, shouts a name: Daffodil.

Scene 4 - Paul Tells Uncle Oscar His Secret
Uncle Oscar enters, having heard the noise, and asks Paul what's going on. Paul reveals his secret: the rocking horse is lucky and tells him the names of racehorses. Oscar calls in Paul's caretaker, Bassett, who admits Paul tells him the names of winning racehorses. The three head to the races to prove it.

Scene 5 - At the Races
Paul is nearly overwhelmed by the noise but manages. Oscar and Bassett place their bets on Daffodil. Bassett takes the role of a race announcer, and the three watch Paul's prediction come true. The three sing of how this will change everything.

Scene 6 - Paul Tells Oscar About the House
Paul tells Oscar he hopes the winnings will stop the house from singing. Paul hears "her" sing of how there's never enough, how there must be more. He makes Oscar promise not to tell his mother about where the money comes from; it might ruin the luck. Oscar tells him to never stop riding.

Scene 8 - Ava at the Piano, with Paul
Paul asks his mother why she always sings sad songs and if she knows anything happier. Ava rebukes him. She expresses profound regret for the stupidity and vanity of her youth. The world only smiles for the young, she says. Paul hopes she'll smile for her birthday tomorrow, but she does not. At her birthday party, Oscar gives her the winnings from the race, but her response is dry: it's not enough.

Scene 9 - The Money Gets Spent
The predictions keep coming true, and the money keeps coming. The money gets spent, and Paul keeps riding. All the while the house is getting filled with finery. But it keeps singing. There must be more, but Paul's luck falters as his energy wanes.

Scene 10 - Ava and Paul
Paul begs his rocking horse for more luck for the Derby. Ava decides Paul's been too agitated lately, and the distance between them grows wider. Ava leaves his room and bemoans Paul's lack of understanding. She deserves luxury now and then. Paul robs her of comfort. As if on cue, she hears Paul noisily riding his rocking horse again. While she screams at him to stop, Oscar, Bassett, and the house cheer him on. Paul calls out a name.

Scene 11 - Paul Dies
The last ride has left Paul gravely ill. Oscar and Bassett tell him they bet it all, and they're set for life. Paul asks his mother if she'll finally be happy--finally smile. She does, but as they leave his room to celebrate, Paul hears the house whisper. There must be more.

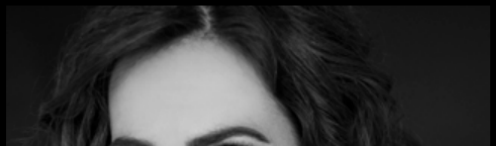
Paul is desperate and crawls to his rocking horse for more luck and more money. He tries to ride, fails, makes one final call for his mother, and dies alone.

THE CAST

ASITHA TENNEKOON

PAUL

Praised by The Globe and Mail for "...his silky, emotional presence on stage – both vocally and dramatically...", Sri Lankan tenor Asitha Tennekoon has established himself as one of Canada's most versatile singing artists. In 2016 he drew critical acclaim and received a Dora Award for his portrayal of Paul in Tapestry Opera/Scottish Opera's Rocking Horse Winner. Asitha is sought after for performances spanning from Baroque to experimental repertoire. This season, Asitha reprises his performance as Paul in Tapestry Opera's remount of Rocking Horse Winner and sings the role of Boy Angel in Du Yun and Royce Vavrek's Pulitzer Prizewinning Angel's Bone presented by Loose Tea Music Theatre in Toronto. Asitha continues to expand his reputation as an impressive interpreter of J.S. Bach's Evangelists and will be featured this season with the Grand Philharmonic Choir in Bach's Christmas Oratorio and the St. John Passion with Vancouver Bach Choir. Asitha will debut in Halifax with Cecilia Concerts, performing the music of Métis composer Ian Cusson. Asitha recently made several operatic debuts; as Ferrando in Edmonton Opera's Cosi fan tutte, the First Priest with Canadian Opera Company's The Magic Flute, Remendado with Pacific Opera Victoria and as Flute in Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream with Vancouver Opera, Jacques Lacombe conducting. Asitha has sung principal roles with Opéra de Montréal, Against the Grain Theatre, Tapestry Opera, Soundstreams Canada, Opera on the Avalon, Opera 5, and Opera Lafayette. Asitha is a Co-Founder of Amplified Opera, a Toronto-based indie Opera company committed to placing artists at the centre of public discourse. He makes his home in the unceded traditional territories of the xwm□□kw□y□□m (Musqueam), Sk□wx□wú7mesh (Squamish), and s□lilw□ta□ (TsleilWaututh) Nations (Vancouver, BC).



LUCIA CESARONI

AVA

With her "lush, creamy voice" and "giddy coloratura", Italian Canadian soprano Lucia Cesaroni is in demand as some of opera's most coveted heroines, making new signature roles out of Verdi's Violetta, Puccini's Mimì, and Mozart's Donna Anna. In 2022/23, she joined the roster of The Metropolitan Opera, where she covered Olga in Giordano's Fedora, sang Violetta in La traviata with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and returned to Pacific Opera Victoria as Fiordiligi in Così fan tutte. In the 2023/24 season, she is set to reprise Susanna in Le nozze di Figaro with Calgary Opera and Ava in Rocking Horse Winner with Tapestry Opera. Her 2021/22 season saw Ms. Cesaroni sing the role of Donna Clara in Zemlinsky's Der Zwerg at the Enescu Festival in Romania, join North Carolina Opera as Mimì in La bohème, debut with both Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra as the soloist in Joe Hisaishi's Princess Mononoke Suite and cover Violetta with the Canadian Opera Company. In 2020/21, Ms. Cesaroni was slated to perform as Fiordiligi in Vancouver Opera's Così fan tutte, Violetta in Saskatoon Opera's production of La traviata, and Mathilde in Rossini's Elisabetta Regina d'Inghilterra with Odyssey Opera (all cancelled due to COVID-19). That season, Ms. Cesaroni was able to sing the role of Ava in a cast recording of the award-winning opera by Gareth Williams and Anna Chatterton, Rocking Horse Winner, which was broadcast on CBC Radio's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera. In other recent seasons, Ms. Cesaroni made acclaimed role debuts, including Violetta and Mimì in Pacific Opera Victoria's productions of La traviata and La bohème, as Donna Anna in Don Giovanni at the Spoleto Festival under James Conlon, Micaëla in Carmen with Maine's Bay Chamber Concerts, and Hanna Glawari in Vancouver Opera's The Merry Widow. "Amazingly enough she even manages somehow to revolve about herself, coquettishly swivelling her svelte form in places where the rest of us aren't even jointed...and then turn around and invest an old chestnut like Lehàr's Vilja ballade with genuine feeling," says Lincoln Kaye for The Vancouver Observer. A champion of Italian bel canto repertoire, Ms. Cesaroni has also joined Boston's Odyssey Opera as Eleonora in Donizetti's rarely performed opera, L'assedio di Calais. Additional operatic credits include Donna Anna at the Teatro Alighieri di Ravenna and the Teatro Coccia di Novara, Musetta in La bohème with Opéra de Montréal, Susanna in Le nozze di Figaro at the Spoleto Festival, Woglinde in Das Rheingold at Pacific Opera Victoria, Norina in Don Pasquale at Saskatoon Opera, Yum-Yum in The Mikado with Toronto Operetta Theatre, and Maria in West Side Story with Vancouver Opera. As a concert artist, Ms. Cesaroni was a soloist for Mahler's Symphony No. 2, "Resurrection", with the Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI in Torino, a programme of duets and arias with Andrea Bocelli at the Columbus Citizens Foundation, NYC, Carmina Burana with the Berliner Symphoniker and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Handel's Messiah with The Victoria Symphony and the Montréal Symphony Orchestra. In addition to her performing schedule, Ms. Cesaroni is the founder and principal at Cesaroni Consulting, offering workshops and coaching in the corporate and post-secondary sectors. She is passionate about articulating the value of artists outside of the performing arts and creating more interdisciplinary thought and practice in North America. To further this end, Lucia is a regular contributor to Opera Canada in her column "Stage Business".

PETER MCGILLIVRAY

BASSETT

Originally from Saskatchewan, baritone Peter McGillivray has recently relocated to Toronto after a decade of living in Northern Ontario. He has been described in the national press as "a gifted comic actor," with a "rich, flexible and strong voice." In recent seasons he has been seen on opera and concert stages from coast to coast, specializing in comic roles such as Dr. Bartolo in Barber of Seville, Don Magnifico in La Cenerentola, Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream, Sir Joseph in HMS Pinafore, Stubb in Moby Dick and Orff's Carmina Burana. He also excels in interpreting more dramatic fare such as Sharpless in Madama Butterfly, Don Pizarro in Fidelio and concert performances of Handel's Messiah, Mahler's Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen, Haydn's Creation and Mendelssohn's Elijah. He has performed lead roles with the Canadian Opera Company as well as opera companies in Dallas, Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Manitoba, Hamilton, Ottawa and Quebec City. Additionally, he spent the 2010-11 season on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera in New York in productions of La Bohème and Strauss' Capriccio. His current season involves performances with Manitoba Opera, Vancouver Opera, Tapestry and Pacific Opera Victoria. McGillivray first leapt to international attention in 2005 by winning top prizes both at the Montreal International Musical Competition and at the Queen Sonja Competition in Oslo, Norway. He was previously the winner of the 2003 CBC/Radio-Canada Young Performers Competition and is an alumnus of the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio program. Since then, he has appeared with many prestigious ensembles in concert, among them, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Orchestra symphonique de Québec, Royal Liverpool, Oslo and Calgary Philharmonics, and Symphony Orchestras in Victoria, Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Windsor and Montreal. He is particularly proud of his longstanding association with Tapestry Opera having created several roles for productions including Morris Panych and James Rolfe's The Overcoat, Omar Daniel's The Shadow, Juliet Palmer's Shelter and Gareth Williams' Rocking Horse Winner. Along with the Gryphon Trio and Elmer Iseler Singers, he is a featured soloist on the 2017 JUNO-nominated recording of Andrew Staniland's Dark Star Requiem. His discography also includes Summer Schemes, an album with pianist Liz Upchurch that the Toronto Star called, "a rich art-song tapestry of summer-themed enchantments," as well as a more recent 2016 Centrediscs release, Cloud Light: The Songs of Norbert Palej.

KEITH KLASSEN

OSCAR

Tenor Keith Klassen has emerged to become one of Canada's busiest vocal artists. Since graduating with honours from the Opera Division at the University of Toronto in 2002, he has performed over one hundred roles from the standard and new operatic repertoire. He has been engaged across Canada, as well as in Scotland, Ireland, Germany, the United States, the Czech Republic, and the Bahamas. He has received rave reviews, praised as a "tour de force, a commanding presence with superb vocal skills" (The Ontario Arts Review), for being "a skilled tenor, vocally spirited and robust, who works his emotional range with depth and authenticity" (For The Record), and as "one of the country's most versatile artists, whose leading-man swagger, comic panache and solid-brass vocals steal the show whenever he appears" (The Toronto Star). NOW Magazine went so far as to rate Keith as one of Toronto's top ten theatre artists. Keith has also continued to create auteur short films, often with an operatic slant, including: 'Silly Distance' - a singer considers what to do with new ideas when they enter our brains whilst running a marathon; 'Big World' - two caterpillars express what they hope will happen to their failed relationship; and 'Odd' - a man tricks another man, and secretes him under a tree. Works in production include 'A Silent Opera' - a man tries to find success by singing opera in a voiceless scape; 'COOOA' - a choose-your-own operatic adventure for live audiences; and 'Best Men' - featuring one of Canada's favourite baritones, Alex Dobson, playing a man, waiting for a wedding reception, who can't get enough of his own alliterations.

MIDORI MARSH

THE HOUSE

Midori Marsh is an American Canadian soprano, hailing from Cleveland, Ohio. She received her Bachelor of Music at Wilfrid Laurier in 2017 and her Master of Music in Opera at the University of Toronto in 2020. In fall 2019 she took home both first prize and audience choice award at the Canadian Opera Company's Centre Stage competition and recently completed her third year with the COC's young artist ensemble. While at the COC she was seen as Nella in Gianni Schicchi, the soprano soloist in Mozart's Requiem, Annina in La Traviata, Papagena in Die Zauberflote and Frasquita in Carmen. A "polished and poised performer", with "a truly gorgeous, expressive sound" she is a known quantity in the Canadian Opera scene, performing with Tapestry Opera, Against the Grain Theatre, the TSO, the National Arts Centre and more. In 2020 she was named one of the CBC's "30 hot Classical Musicians under 30" and in 2022 she was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for her portrayal of Papagena in the COC's 2022 production of The Magic Flute. She took first prize at the 2023 Quilico awards, was a semifinalist in the Metropolitan Opera's 2023 Laffont competition and a 2023 Lotte Lenya finalist.

ALEX HETHERINGTON

THE HOUSE

Recently named one of CBC's "30 hot classical musicians under 30", mezzo-soprano Alex Hetherington is in her second year of residency with the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble. Recent operatic highlights include singing Mercédès in Carmen and the Attendant in Salome with the Canadian Opera Company, as well as premiering the role of Riley in R.U.R. A Torrent of Light with Tapestry Opera. Alex has given concert performances with the National Arts Centre Orchestra (Mozart Requiem; Golden Slumbers Kiss Your Eyes), the Victoria Symphony (Songs from the House of Death), the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra (Neruda Songs), and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (The Bear). Alex holds a Master's in Opera Performance from the University of Toronto, where she won the Norcop Award in Art Song and completed a research project examining art song performance practice through the lens of modern gender theory. Alex is passionate about contemporary music, composition, and innovative recital programming.

ANIKA VENKATESH

THE HOUSE

Hailing from Coast Salish Territories, Anika Venkatesh is a genre-defying vocalist currently based in Tkarón:to, and a recent graduate of the University of Toronto under the tutelage of Laura Tucker. Recent stage credits include the world premiere of Chan Ka Nin's Dragon's Tale (Tapestry Opera & Soundstreams Choir 21), alto soloist in R. Nathaniel Dett's The Ordering of Moses (The Nathaniel Dett Chorale & The Rochester Oratorio Society), and Drusilla in Verdi's L'incoronazione di Poppea (NUOVA Vocal Arts). Along with their classical, operatic, and choral skillsets and special interest in contemporary music, Anika is also a jazz and R&B musician. Upcoming performances include the premiere of Quote Unquote Collective's production, Universal Child Care at Canadian Stage in February 2024. Through musical storytelling, Anika hopes to garner curiosity, reflection, kindness, play, connection, tenderness, intimacy, and strength.

KORIN THOMAS-SMITH

THE HOUSE

Named one of CBC Music's 30 hot classical musicians under 30 in 2021, Canadian baritone Korin Thomas-Smith has been carving a career across North America. Korin joins the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio in 2023, following his time as a Young Artist at the Glimmerglass Festival performing as Argante in their production of Rinaldo. Korin is an alumnus of the University of Toronto Opera School, the Rebanks Family Fellowship and International Performance Residency Program, and Yale University. Korin has also participated as a Fellow at the Music Academy of the West and the Ravinia Steans Music Institute.

AYSEL TAGHI-ZADA

VIOLIN

Aysel Taghi-Zada is a passionate violinist/violist devoted to the performance of classical and contemporary music. She has collaborated with some of the most distinguished composers and musicians from North America and Europe such as Philip Glass, Brian Current, Salvatore Sciarrino, Chris Paul Harman, Kevin Lau, Mark Fewer, Pierre Leroux, David Geringas, Gidon Kramer and Pascale Beaudin. She is frequently invited to perform with contemporary ensembles such as New Music Concerts, Freesound Ensemble, Thin Edge New Music Collective, Soundstreams Canada, and Continuum Contemporary Music. She was invited to be a Guest Concertmaster for the Georgian Bay Symphony in 2018 and 2019, and a Guest Assistant Concertmaster for the Kingston Symphony Orchestra in 2019. She has performed with several orchestras, including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, Windsor Symphony, Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra and Toronto Concert Orchestra. She is a graduate of the Artist Diploma Program at the Glenn Gould School where she studied with Barry Shiffman. While studying at McGill University with Jonathan Crow, she co-founded Ensemble Paramirabo, a group that specializes in showcasing music written by Canadian composers, and she performed on their first album Autoportrait. Most recently, Aysel became a member of Labyrinth Ensemble, dedicated to the study and performance of sonic traditions of modal makam music.

TANYA CHARLES IVENIUK

VIOLIN

A native of Hamilton, Ontario, with roots in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tanya Charles Iveniuk has performed across North and South America, and the Caribbean. Recipient of the Women's Art Associate of Canada – Luella McCleary Award, the Gabriella Dory Prize in Music, and the Hamilton Black History Association's John C Holland Award, Tanya received a Bachelor of Music (Performance) from the University of Toronto, and an Artist Diploma (Orchestral Performance) from the Glenn Gould School. Currently, she is the concertmaster of the Obiora Ensemble and has been since its creation. Additionally, she is a member of Ensemble du Monde (Guadeloupe), Toronto Mozart Players, and the Odin Quartet. Her former posts include Sinfonia Toronto, as Concertmaster and soloist with the Colour of Music Festival Orchestra (COMF) and the COMF Virtuosi (SC, USA), and Associate Concertmaster of the 2015 Gateways Festival Orchestra (NY, USA). Tanya is a dedicated educator, and an in-demand string adjudicator and clinician abroad as well as in Ontario. In the Caribbean, for over ten years, Tanya has been instrumental in aiding with the implementation of string-education training in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. She is also on the Education Outreach Team for Ensemble du Monde (Guadeloupe), the Logistics and String Education teams for the All Caribbean Youth Orchestra program (St. Martin/Sint Maarten) and has been a guest instructor for the Centro Regional de Estudios Musicales (Mexico). Tanya is based in Toronto and is on faculty at the University of Toronto – Faculty of Music, and Royal Conservatory of Music (Oscar Peterson Program).

BRENNA MCLANE

VIOLA

Nova Scotian violist, Brenna McLane, has made a name for herself as a versatile chamber, orchestral, and studio musician, comfortably playing both new creations and masterworks. Brenna is currently writing her first composition for the Canadian Arabic Orchestra, to be performed for the Festival of Arabic Music and Arts (FAMA) in October. Brenna has had the pleasure of sharing the stage with Persian fusion band, Chaartaar; pianist Richard Clayderman; and has been seen in TV shows Hannibal and Umbrella Academy. She performs regularly with the Canadian Arabic Orchestra and the Scarborough Philharmonic as principal violist.

SYBIL SHANAHAN

CELLO

Sybil Shanahan has played the cello for as long as she can remember. A contemporary performer comfortable across many musical styles, Sybil currently performs with Solidaridad Tango, the classically based Tadioli Duo and she is the founder of Beaux Strings, an event music performance business for which she is also a published music arranger of several pop songs for string ensembles. A travel lover, Sybil's lifelong commitment to the cello and the medium of chamber music has provided her with opportunities to perform around the world, including most recently debut performances in Buenos Aires and Brooklyn. Between 2010-2020, she performed and recorded extensively with Ensemble Vivant, "Canada's chamber music treasure" (Toronto Star). Her first album, Caprice, was released in 2014 and features several previously unrecorded French Romantic cello duos with Coenraad Bloemendal. As a freelance performer, she has joined professional orchestras across the province for special projects. Rocking Horse Winner marks her Tapestry Opera debut. A strong believer in the power of music to create community, Sybil manages a full private teaching studio for adult cellists based in Toronto, and she has been on faculty at Lake Field Music Camp since 2012. When not involved in musical pursuits, she can often be found on her paddle board, skis or bike, or tending to her spoiled cats. Sybil completed her University education in Europe. She holds a Master's Degree from the class of cello soloist Patrick Demenga in Switzerland and a Bachelor from the class of Gregor Horsch in Amsterdam. www.sybilshanahan.com

STÉPHANE MAYER

RÉPÉTITEUR / PIANO

Pianist and composer Stéphane Mayer has established himself as one of Canada's most sought-after répétiteurs and vocal coaches. A graduate of the COC ensemble, Stéphane recently returned to the Canadian Opera Company as head coach for their production of Carmen. Stéphane has worked across Canada with many leading opera companies on productions such as La Bohème (Edmonton Opera), Louis Riel (Opéra de Québec), Missing (Pacific Opera Victoria), The Rocking Horse Winner (Tapestry Opera), Ours (Opera on the Avalon) and Flight (The Royal Conservatory of Music). An accomplished art-song recitalist, having studied German Lied at the famed Schubert Institute, Stéphane has appeared on stage with many of Canada's premiere vocal artists. For the past three summers, Stéphane has served as Head of Music for Highlands Opera Studio in Haliburton for their productions of L'elisir d'amore, Eugene Onegin and Don Giovanni. A graduate of McGill University's Schulich School of Music, Stéphane also worked as a vocal coach and accompanist at Western University.

GARETH WILLIAMS

COMPOSER

Composer and songwriter Gareth Williams lives in Edinburgh, where he makes work that ranges from opera, theatre and song writing to chamber and orchestral music. He is a Chancellor's Fellow at Edinburgh College of Art, where he lectures in composition. He seeks to find new participants and audiences for opera and music theatre with his work, and to shed light on stories and communities that have been overlooked, exploring ideas of identity and vulnerability in his vocal writing. His music is often site-specific and responsive, with performances happening in lighthouses, whisky distilleries, nuclear bunkers, and libraries. He creates award-winning work for companies such as Scottish Opera, Red Note Ensemble, National Theatre of Scotland, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Tapestry Opera, Theatre Passe Muraille, Bridge Theatre, Hebrides Ensemble, Chamber Music Scotland, and Noise Opera. He was the inaugural Composer in Residence at Scottish Opera from 2012 to 2015. During this time, he created a series of works, including Breath Cycle, where he created songs specifically for patients with Cystic Fibrosis at Gartnavel Royal Hospital, who are not allowed in the same room as one another due to dangers of cross-infection. He returned to Scottish Opera in 2021 to revisit this project and continues to work with people living with a variety of conditions such as Long Covid, Asphasia, and COPD, in Breath Cycle II. In 2022, he created the chamber opera 'Rubble', commissioned to celebrate 60 years of Scottish Opera. He self-released the concept album "Songs From the Last Page" in August 2023 - after creating and touring a collection of songs that set and transform the final lines of famous works of Scottish literature across UK Book Festivals, and he is currently creating "A History of Paper", a new musical theatre work for Dundee Rep theatre, with writer Oliver Emanuel, for premiere in 2024.

ANNA CHATTERTON

LIBRETTIST

Anna Chatterton is a librettist, playwright and actor. Her operas have been produced by the Canadian Opera Company/Toronto, Center for Contemporary Opera / NYC, Saratoga Opera/ NY, World Stage / Harbourfront Centre/ Toronto, Scottish Opera, Tapestry Music Theatre/ Toronto, The California Institute of the Arts, Third Eye Theatre / Chicago, Toronto Masque Theatre and Opera Maine. Her plays have been produced by the Shaw Festival, Tarragon Theatre, Nightwood Theatre, Theatre Centre, Passe Muraille Theatre, and Alberta Theatre Projects. Her opera Sweat was made into a film, which recently premiered at the Kingston Film Festival. She has been nominated for multiple Dora Awards, two Governor-General Literary Awards for Drama, and two K. M. Hunter Awards for Drama.

MICHAEL HIDETOSHI MORI

DIRECTOR

Michael Hidetoshi Mori is an internationally acclaimed stage director, working equally in site-specific settings and conventional theatres. As an operatic stage director, Michael is a two-time Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Direction winner for Rocking Horse Winner and R.U.R. A Torrent of Light. His work ranges from cutting-edge explorations in presentation with Augmented Opera at Sidewalk Labs, to neo-classical settings of Rigoletto at Sacramento Opera and Il Trittico at West Bay Opera, to community-integrated story development and collaborations with Indigenous artists with Shanawdithit in Toronto and St. John's and Maada'ookii Songlines with the Luminato Festival. As a film director, his music video Where do I go, in collaboration with singer/pianist/songwriter Morgan Paige Melbourne, recently won best picture at Toronto's Experimental/Dance/Music Film Festival. Michael is the Chair of the Board at The Association for Opera in Canada and a board member of Opera America. At Tapestry Opera, Michael conceived and co-created two national programs, Women in Musical Leadership and The Canadian Opera Resource. Beginning in 2014, Michael piloted Tapestry Explorations (Tap:Ex), experimenting with fully choreographed art-music (Revolutions), synthesized cut-film, track, turn-table, live soprano and percussion (Tables-Turned), a collaboration with punk band Fu*ked Up (Metallurgy), and a mash-up of opera, Persian music and hip-hop dealing with gender and sexual politics (Forbidden). Under Michael's leadership, Tapestry Opera has been called "The leader of the Canadian opera pack" (Globe and Mail), "One of Ten Artists changing the artistic landscape of Canada" (CBC), and "One of ten Torontonians to watch" (Toronto Star), for his accomplishments at Tapestry Opera.

KAMNA GUPTA

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Kamna Gupta is an American Prize-winning conductor experienced in operatic, orchestral, and choral repertoires. Several premieres mark the upcoming 2023-24 season: Ms. Gupta leads the Trinity Church Wall Street Choirs and NOVUS in Luna Pearl Woolf's new oratorio Number Our Days (part of the inaugural season of New York's newest venue, the Perelman Performing Arts Center), and she returns to Spoleto Festival USA to conduct the world premiere of Ruinous Gods (Chaker / Shlesinger). In addition to these, Ms. Gupta makes her Washington National Opera debut as the cover conductor for Songbird, and she returns to Tapestry Opera to conduct Rocking Horse Winner, which she recorded to much acclaim during the pandemic, and which was featured on CBC's Music's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera. In the 2022-2023 season, Ms. Gupta made her Vancouver Opera debut conducting Bizet's Les pêcheurs de perles, and served as music director and conductor for the world premiere and subsequent tour of The Ritual of Breath is the Rite to Resist (Berger / Reily / Francis). She also made her PROTOTYPE Festival debut as the conductor for In Our Daughter's Eyes (Du Yun / McQuilken) following its successful premiere under her baton at LA Opera in 2022. She returned to Mannes Opera to conduct La Calisto, returned to the International Contemporary Ensemble to lead a program in their Composer Portraits at Miller Theatre, and joined Atlanta Opera as cover conductor and chorus master for their production of Bernstein's Candide. In summer 2023, she returned for her fifth season to The Glimmerglass Festival to conduct the world premiere of The Rip Van Winkles (Morris / Fuentes). Recent highlights include her debut with the International Contemporary Ensemble in A Cockroach's Tarantella and Zolle (Du Yun) at the Skirball Center for Performing Arts, the world premiere of Jungle Book (Sankaram / O'Rourke) at The Glimmerglass Festival, the Next Generation Competition with Beth Morrison Projects, and joining Spoleto Festival USA to conduct in their Music in Time series, cover conduct Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and serve as conductor for La bohème. Other highlights include engagements with the Seattle Opera, the Royal Opera in Versailles, American Lyric Theater, Sarasota Opera, and Opera Saratoga. Active internationally, Gupta's orchestral credits include performances in France, Germany, Russia, and the Czech Republic; leading the Leipzig Barockorchester in an all-Bach program was a special highlight. Previous highlights include her work with the New York Youth Symphony as an apprentice conductor and her role as a Conducting Fellow at the Atlantic Music Festival, where she recorded many contemporary works by living composers. Gupta's passion for education has also led her to work with education departments at the New York Philharmonic and the Castleton Festival. Based in New York City, she is active as a pianist and harpsichordist in addition to conducting. Gupta received her Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting from Arizona State University and her Bachelor of Arts in Music from Princeton University, where she graduated cum laude.

郝邦宇STEVEN HAO
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

郝邦宇 Steven Hao is a Toronto-based director, actor, and writer passionate about creating work that breaks the boundary of what theatre can be. Born and raised in China, Steven is very open about how his upbringing and cultural influence have often impacted how he tells stories and leads his process. In his directing work, there's a huge emphasis put on 'play' that usually guides his staging process and the creative yet efficient application of design. For that reason, his work is often highly sensorial and heavily conceptual: compact with innovative stage pictures and invigorating sound and lighting design. In recent years, Steven has taken a particular interest in Asian stories in the context of Musical Theatre as he's fascinated by the interception of cultural differences. He most recently directed the latest iteration of A Perfect Bowl of Pho, the only show to receive four stars from the Toronto Star and the best-selling show at the Toronto Fringe Festival. In his continued journey toward artistic revelation, Steven is very interested in crossing theatrical forms and reimagining what theatre can look, sound, and feel like onstage. Steven is also committed to discovering ways to make theatre more accessible and sustainable for all involved onstage and off. Select directing credits include Director, Ordinary Days (Shifting Ground Collective); Assistant Director, Heroes of The Fourth Turning (The Howland Company/Crow's Theatre); Assistant Director, The Chinese Lady (Crow's Theatre/Studio 180 Theatre/fu-GEN Theatre); Director, A Perfect Bowl of Pho (Toronto Fringe Festival/Kick & Push Festival). Select acting credits include Puck, A Midsummer Night's Dream (Canadian Stage); Cockroach, Cockroach (Tarragon Theatre); Bartender/Zeus, Trojan Girls & The Outhouse of Atreus (OtM/Factory Theatre)

MING WONG
COSTUME DESIGNER

Ming is an award-winning Toronto costume designer and stylist. She has worked in theatre, dance, opera, and film & television for over 15 years. For Tapestry: Rocking Horse Winner (original production). Elsewhere: The Master Plan, Red Velvet, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo, Uncle Vanya, The Wedding Party (Crow's); Alice in Wonderland (Bad Hats); Rent (Stratford Festival); Things I Know to be True (Company Theatre/Mirvish); Peter's Final Flight (Ross Petty Productions); Public Enemy, Is God Is, (Canadian Stage/Obsidian/Necessary Angel); Sizwe Banzi is Dead, Pipeline (Soulpepper); Just to Get Married, Trouble in Mind (Shaw Festival); Hansel und Gretel (Canadian Opera Company); The Color Purple (Citadel Theatre/RMTC). Digital: Alice in Winterland (Ross Petty Productions); New Monuments (Luminato/Canadian Stage); Identity, Savitri (Against the Grain). Upcoming: Once (TIP); The Guide to Being Fabulous (Soulpepper); The Inheritance, Canadian Stage. Other: 2021 recipient of the Virginia & Myrtle Cooper Award, 2-time Dora Award Winner. @mingwongdesign.

ECHO ZHOU 周芷會

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Echo is an award-winning, proud Chinese immigrant, Tkaronto-based scenographer working in live performance. In her professional career. She is focused on IBPOC and queer storytelling, and one of Echo's passions is to make live performances as accessible as possible. She has designed for the National Arts Centre, Tapestry Opera, Tarragon Theatre, Studio 180, Buddies in the Bad Times, Theatre Passe Muraille, Thousand Island Playhouse, Frog in Hand, The Theatre Centre, and many live performance festivals across the country. Her design works have been presented in Japan and China as well. Her favourite recent credits are A Poem for Rabia (Tarragon Theatre), Dragon's Tale (Tapestry Opera), The Chinese Lady (Studio 180), Benevolence (Benevolence Collective), Between a Wok and a Hotpot (Cahoots Theatre), The Year of the Cello (Theatre Passe Muraille), HMS Pinafore (Vancouver Opera), Every Brilliant Thing (Thousand Island Playhouse), White Girls in Moccasins (Manidoons Collective), Mr. Shi and His Lover and I Swallowed Moon Made of Iron (Music Picnic). Echo is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada. For Grandpa. 獻給最親愛的嗲嗲

JAWON KANG

SET DESIGNER

Jawon is a Korean Canadian theatre designer based in Toronto. Her theatre credits include set for This is how we got here (upcoming, Persephone Theatre); costume for A Poem for Rabia (Tarragon Theatre); set for Mizushobai (Tableau D'Hôte); costume for Armadillos (Factory Theatre); set and costume for Cravings (Curveball Creative); set and costume assistance for Of the Sea (Tapestry Opera & Obsidian Theatre); set for Fairview (Canadian Stage); set for Redbone Coonhound (Tarragon Theatre & Imago Theatre); design assistance for Choir Boy (Canadian Stage); set designs for Mary Stuart, Ubu Roi and Fefu and her friends (Directors' Workshop Project/ Stratford Festival); associate set design for Death and the King's Horseman (Stratford Festival); costume design for Venus (NTS); costume design for Mother and Child and 3..2..1 (NTS); design assistance for 21 Black Futures (Obsidian Theatre and CBC). Jawon is a recipient of 2022 Tyrone Guthrie Award for theatre design study and was nominated for outstanding scenic/projection design at 2023 Dora Mavor Moore Award with Frank Donato and Dezmond Arnkvarn. jawonkang.myportfolio.com

CARLOS VARELA
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Carlos began his career in his native Mexico, where he worked for 8 years with the Thomas Jefferson Musical Theatre Company, touring internationally with many productions. He has also worked with OCESA throughout Latin America, production managing tours of major Broadway productions such as Mary Poppins, The Lion King, and Mexican hit "Mentiras, El Musical." Since moving to Toronto in 2015, he has focused on work with Summerworks, Rutas Panamericanas, Caminos, Progress, The Fringe Festival, Riser and LUMINATO. Selected theatre credits include: 21 Black Futures (Obsidian Theatre), Dixon Road (Musical Company - Dora award nominee) Take The Moment: Cynthia Dale (Musical Company), Anthropic Traces (The Thin Edge Collective), Broken Shapes (Theatre Centre), YERMA (Coal Mine Theatre), Manman la mer (Theatre Catapulte) & Treemonisha (Volcano Theatre).

MICAH CHAMPAGNE
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Micah Champagne is a queer artist living in Toronto, Canada. They mostly work as a technician and designer for theatre. They have most recently transferred their skills and begun working for IATSE 873 as a film technician in both the electrics and grip department. They love using their technical expertise to help create stories of all kinds as well as shaping stories through writing and editing.

MYRA A. MALLEY
STAGE MANAGER

Myra is a career stage manager for both opera and drama. Theatre companies worked with include the Foster Festival, Grand Theatre, Citadel Theatre, Watermark Theatre and both the Stratford and Shaw Festivals; Opera companies include Toronto Operetta Theatre, Opera Hamilton, Pacific Opera Victoria, Vancouver Opera, Edmonton Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Opera Lyra and The Banff Centre. Myra holds an MFA in Stage Directing from York University and a MA in Theatre History from the University of Toronto. She has taught both Stage Management and Theatre History at the post-secondary level.

TAMARA VUCKOVIC

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Tamara is a Toronto-based Stage Manager, Producer and Director in primarily Theatre and Opera. Her work has taken her across Canada, to the US, and overseas. Tamara is the Managing Producer and Resident Stage Manager of indie performance company ARC, and the Administrative Manager and Resident Stage Manager of opera performance company Off Centre Music Salon. Tamara has worked with theatres such as the Canadian Opera Company, Vancouver Opera, Opera Atelier, Tapestry Opera, Soundstreams, CanadianStage, Soulpepper Theatre, Volcano Theatre, The Grand Theatre, The Harbourfront Centre, Crow's Theatre, Tarragon Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Buddies in Bad Times, Factory Theatre, The Theatre Centre, Coal Mine Theatre, Nightwood Theatre, County Stage Company, Shakespeare in the Ruff, among others.

JINGYI ZHOU

SURTITLIST

Originally from Suzhou, China, pianist Jingyi Zhou has performed in many countries, including the United States, Canada, Austria, Spain, and China. She has participated in many music festivals such as the Gijon International Piano Festival, the Atlantic Music Festival, Alpenkammermusik, Tapestry Opera Songbook Program, and Orford Musique. Jingyi has also earned recognition and awards at the Yamaha Competition, Asian Music Competition, and Chow's Scholarship Competition. In addition, she was the recipient of the Chinese Government Study Abroad Scholarship, William Weaver's Prize in Music and Language, Ginny Medland Green Graduate Fellowship in Music, and Yoshiteru Koga and Sumiko Hara Piano Pedagogy Scholarship. Jingyi received her Bachelor of Music degree from Bard Conservatory of Music, as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree in German Studies. Her piano teachers include James Parker, Steven Philcox, Benjamin Hochman, Misha Namirovsky, and Elise Yun. Recently, Jingyi graduated with a master's degree in Piano Pedagogy and Performance, during which she worked as a teaching assistant for the German Lieder Class and as a piano teacher in the University of Toronto Piano Pedagogy Program.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Rocking Horse Winner goes back to 2016; Tapestry Opera's history as a company that creates and shares stories through music goes back to 1979; DH Lawrence's history goes back to 1885. The story of this place, the history of this land, goes back much further than that.

Rocking Horse Winner is a story about greed–the kind of greed that drives people mad with anxiety, that disturbs sleep, that spurs actions violent and unthinkable. In Lawrence's England, as in modern-day Canada, rampant greed is ever present. We must never forget that these lands and the people who call it home still suffer from colonial greed; from Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit individuals to the lasting, inter-generational impact of the Residential School System to the continued extraction of natural resources.

We are privileged to live and tell stories such as this one on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples who thrived on these lands for thousands of years before history was written down. Covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaties, this place is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples who continue to care for it alongside settlers, refugees, and displaced people from around the globe.

Acknowledgment is an important first step - truth must come before reconciliation - but as our stories continue to grow in length and scope, we must also continue to grow in knowledge and action. We must continue to question the stories and histories we're given, to situate ourselves and the work we do in the context of this time and place, and to break down barriers to art and creation wherever we find them.

SPECIAL REQUEST

Please join Tapestry Opera in supporting Anishnawbe Health Toronto to help improve, support, and promote the health, well-being, and healing of Indigenous people in spirit, mind, emotion, and body within a multi-disciplinary healthcare model.

ABOUT TAPESTRY OPERA

Founded in 1979, Tapestry Opera is an award-winning Toronto-based company dedicated to creating, developing and performing original, progressive opera. We are passionate about timely, resonant stories told in innovative settings and interpreted by extraordinary artists. We create space to unite diverse art forms, creators, and communities to develop powerful, boundary-breaking opera that reflects and changes the world. We believe in embedding our values in everything we do, on and offstage, and work to create a flexible, adaptable, and accountable culture for our time and communities.

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