

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 23, 2019

**Opera Atelier Marries Past with Present, Song with Dance, in Evocative One-Night-Only Performance of Royal Chapel Concert**  
**–The Angel Speaks –**

***Lauded Company Redefines Traditional Concert Experience, Uniting Iconic Music by Purcell with New Canadian Commission for Period Instruments***

**Toronto, ON – Opera Atelier** is honoured to present ***The Angel Speaks***, a groundbreaking one-hour concert that effortlessly blends masterpieces of the baroque repertoire with the Canadian premiere of *Annunciation*, a new commission by Toronto-based composer and violinist **Edwin Huizinga** for period instruments. This singular performance takes place in the **Samuel Hall Currelly Gallery** at the historic **Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)**, **February 21, 2019, at 8pm**. Soprano **Mireille Asselin** and Baritone **Jesse Blumberg** will be joined by members of the **Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra** under the direction of **David Fallis**, alongside **Artists of Atelier Ballet**.

“When *The Angel Speaks* was first presented to a sold-out audience at the Royal Chapel in Versailles, it was greeted with eight sustained minutes of applause,” says Opera Atelier Founding Co-Artistic Director **Marshall Pynkoski**, who also stages the concert. “I like to think of the performance as a ‘theatrical intervention’ in which we insert contemporary choreography and specially-commissioned music into a program of 17<sup>th</sup> century music with baroque choreography. The two styles are meant to overlap with each other, reflect one another and merge into a unique creative endeavour. This innovative concert underlines Opera Atelier’s core belief that creations and techniques from the past can act as important catalysts for creating something vibrant and new for 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences.”

Baroque, contemporary music and dance are united in *The Angel Speaks*. Celebrated baroque music by Henry Purcell and William Boyce are clear influences for Huizinga’s new contemporary composition. Working with a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke entitled ‘The Annunciation’ - and translated by American writer Grace Andreacchi - Canadian composer Huizinga has created an original score for six soloists from Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Soprano Asselin, Baritone Blumberg, and five Artists of Atelier Ballet.

Rilke’s poetry is mystic – almost surreal in its depiction of myths and legends from Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions. Huizinga’s musical setting endeavours to transport audiences to new depths of understanding about themselves, the past, and the defining stories that shape our present moment, all while experiencing an entertaining, yet deeply thought-provoking new work that is very much in the milieu of the authentic period music for which Opera Atelier is renowned.

The program’s baroque choreography was developed by Opera Atelier Co-Artistic Director **Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg**; and the contemporary choreography by Atelier Ballet Artist **Tyler Gledhill**. The resulting concert promises a seamless blend of old and new, redefining the very definition of the traditional concert experience.

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Violinist and Composer Huizinga performs internationally as a baroque, classical, and improvising musician. He is a founding member of ACRONYM, a 12-piece ensemble that focuses on recording previously unrecorded baroque music. He founded a cross-genre duo called 'Fire & Grace' with Grammy award-winning guitarist William Coulter, exploring the connective musical elements of folk and contemporary traditions from around the world. Recently, he was part of the ensemble that performed at the funeral of Senator John McCain.

Opera Atelier Founding Co-Artistic Director Pynkoski has collaborated with many of the finest artists in the world of early music and his productions of opera and ballet have toured throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the Toronto Arts Award, the Opera Canada Ruby Award for outstanding contribution to opera in Canada, and the TIME Magazine award for Classical music. He has been named Chevalier dans L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the Government of France and most recently was awarded the Order of Canada.

Opera Atelier Co-Artistic Director and Choreographer Lajeunesse Zingg has performed and choreographed internationally for more than two decades. She received her training in London, Copenhagen, and Paris. Lajeunesse Zingg has received a multitude of awards including the prestigious Toronto Arts Award, the Opera Canada Ruby Award for outstanding achievement in the field of opera in Canada, and was named by TIME Magazine as one of Canada's most influential artists in the field of Classical music. She was recently awarded the Order of Canada for her contribution to ballet and opera in Canada.

Dancer and Choreographer Gledhill trained at The National Ballet School in Toronto, Het Nationale Balletacademie in Amsterdam, and The Pacific Northwest Ballet School in Seattle. He began his career in the Netherlands with Introdans, touring throughout Europe and Asia before joining The Göteborg Ballet and Cullberg Ballet in Sweden. Gledhill then relocated to Toronto where he enjoys an outstanding career as an independent dance artist. He has been an Artist of Atelier Ballet for the past 10 years.

Canadian Conductor and Music Director Fallis is renowned for his work in many genres of music. As Music Director of Opera Atelier he has led critically acclaimed productions of major operatic works by Mozart, Monteverdi, Lully, Purcell, Rameau, Gluck, Handel, Weber, and Charpentier. He has conducted at the Royal Opera House in Versailles, the Glimmerglass Festival, the Singapore Festival, Festival Vancouver, Houston Grand Opera, the Seoul Arts Centre, Cleveland Opera, Wolftrap Theater, Utah Opera, and in major opera houses in Japan.

Soprano Asselin made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Poussette in *Manon* where she later went on to perform the role of Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. In concert, she has appeared with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Edmonton Symphony, St. Thomas Fifth Avenue (NYC), Calgary Philharmonic, Les Violins du Roy, and at Carnegie Hall. Her operatic credits include Minerva (*Ulysse*) and Euridice (*Orfeo*) with Boston Early Music Festival; Servilia (*Clemenza*), Adele (*Fledermaus*) and Semele at the Canadian Opera Company; as well as Nannetta (*Falstaff*), Thérèse/Tiresias (*Mamelles de Tiresias*), and Frasquita (*Carmen*) at Wolf Trap Opera.

Baritone Blumberg has performed a selection of roles at Minnesota Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Atlanta Opera, Boston Early Music Festival, and at London's Royal Festival Hall. He has made concert appearances with American Bach Soloists, Boston Baroque, Apollo's Fire, Montreal Baroque Festival, Arion Baroque, Early Music Vancouver, and on Lincoln Center's *American Songbook* series. As a recitalist he appears often with pianist Martin Katz, and has collaborated with New York Festival of Song, Marilyn Horne Foundation, and Mirror Visions Ensemble.

Tickets and concert information for *The Angel Speaks* at: [OperaAtelier.com](http://OperaAtelier.com)

**About Opera Atelier (OperaAtelier.com)**

Established in 1985, Opera Atelier is Canada’s premier period opera/ballet company, specializing in producing opera, ballet, and drama from the 17th and 18th centuries. While drawing upon the aesthetics and ideals of the period, Opera Atelier goes beyond “reconstruction” and infuses each production with an inventive theatricality that resonates with modern audiences. These productions feature soloists of international acclaim, period ballet, original instruments, elaborate stage decor, intricate costumes, and an imaginative energy that sets Opera Atelier apart. Founding Artistic Directors Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg were both recently awarded the Order of Canada for their contributions to opera and ballet.

Opera Atelier has been acclaimed throughout Canada, and tours on a regular basis to the Royal Opera House in Versailles. The company has also performed at the Glimmerglass Festival in New York, Salzburg Festival, the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, and La Scala in Milan. Opera Atelier has collaborated with some of early music’s most distinguished artists including Andrew Parrott, Trevor Pinnock, Hervé Niquet, Marc Minkowski and many others.

Through historically informed performance practice, Opera Atelier allows audiences to experience the continuum of musical form; hearing and seeing great works in the ways these works might have first resonated. In inspired programming, Opera Atelier creates art that speaks to the here and now; finding fresh relevance for society in evergreen creations. Through impassioned outreach and audience development, Opera Atelier aims to secure a future by ensuring opera has a place in the hearts and lives of the upcoming generation.

**LISTING INFORMATION**

**Opera Atelier presents  
*The Angel Speaks***

- Dates:** February 21, 2019 at 8pm  
Informal post-show reception to meet the artists.  
Light refreshments/cash bar available. (9pm to 10pm)
- Ticket Prices:** \$69 plus taxes and fees.
- Venue:** Royal Ontario Museum, Samuel Hall Currelly Gallery  
100 Queens Park (Bloor Street entrance)  
Toronto, Ontario
- Tickets and Info:** [OperaAtelier.com](http://OperaAtelier.com)

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