

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 28, 2020

## **Opera Atelier Announces Iconic 35th Anniversary Season**

***2020/21 Season Includes Mozart's *The Magic Flute*,  
*The Angel Speaks* – a new Canadian commission – paired with Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*,  
A Collaboration with world-renowned pianist Angela Hewitt at Trasimeno Festival in Italy,  
and Extraordinary recognition of Co-Artistic Directors by the Government of France***

**Toronto, ON** — Opera Atelier proudly announces its iconic 35th Anniversary Season with two groundbreaking works at the historic **Elgin Theatre**: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's ***The Magic Flute***, considered the company's most successful production in its history, on stage from **October 22–November 1, 2020**; and ***The Angel Speaks*** – a new Canadian commission – double-billed with Henry Purcell's ***Dido and Aeneas*** from **February 20–27, 2021**. Both productions will feature the full corps of **Artists of Atelier Ballet** with choreography by **Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg C.M.**, stage direction by **Marshall Pynkoski C.M.**, and the renowned **Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra (Music Director Elisa Citterio)** under the baton of Opera Atelier Music Director **David Fallis**.

Additionally, Opera Atelier, through special invitation by lauded Canadian pianist **Angela Hewitt**, will make their debut at the internationally-renowned **Trasimeno Festival in Italy on July 2, 2020**, performing alongside Hewitt. The 2020/21 season will also celebrate the **extraordinary recognition of Opera Atelier's Co-Artistic Directors Pynkoski and Lajeunesse Zingg who have been made Officers of the Order of Arts and Letters (l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres)** by the Government of France. This distinguished award recognizes eminent artists who have contributed significantly to furthering the arts in France and throughout the world. The award ceremony will take place in December 2021 at the Palace of Versailles.

Opera Atelier's 35th Anniversary Season opens with Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, sung in Andrew Porter's internationally acclaimed English translation — it remains the most captivating work with which to introduce children and adults to opera, and to Mozart's music in particular. Hailed as “the most imaginative staging of the opera to be seen in [Toronto] in the last quarter century” (Toronto Star, following its premiere in 1991), *The Magic Flute* remains Opera Atelier's most sensational and accessible production to date. The acclaimed cast includes Opera Atelier audience favourites: Tenor **Colin Ainsworth** in the role of Tamino, Soprano **Mireille Asselin** as Pamina, Bass-baritone **Douglas Williams** performs as Papageno, Bass **Gustav Andreassen** as Sarastro, and Soprano **Holly Flack** as the Queen of the Night. **Gerard Gauci** provides an elaborate set design, with radiant lighting design by **Michelle Ramsay**.

“*The Magic Flute* was a seminal production for Opera Atelier, a dramatic turning point when it premiered in 1991,” says Pynkoski. “It was the first fully-staged period production of Mozart in North America and generated enormous interest internationally — reshaping the early music landscape. As part of our 35th Anniversary restaging, the production has been extensively refurbished — including new costumes for all

of the principal artists, designed by award-winning Canadian costume designer **Michael Gianfrancesco** — and a new flying machine for the Queen of the Night.”

The season continues with the completed version of Opera Atelier’s new music for period instruments titled *The Angel Speaks*. Excerpts from this new commission, by Toronto-based composer and violinist **Edwin Huizinga**, originally premiered in 2017 at The Royal Chapel of Versailles, and have since been performed in Chicago and Toronto to critical acclaim. *The Angel Speaks* seamlessly blends masterpieces of the Baroque repertoire with Huizinga’s compositions. Described by Pynkoski as a ‘theatrical intervention’, *The Angel Speaks* explores the presence of the supernatural in our lives through the interweaving of Baroque and contemporary compositions for singers, dancers, and an ensemble on period instruments. The luminary cast features Mireille Asselin as the Blessed Virgin, **Jesse Blumberg** as an Angel; with additional contemporary choreography by **Tyler Gledhill**.

Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* is a miniature masterpiece — English repertoire at its very best — replete with exquisite storytelling supported by a luxuriously melodic score. The opera offers exceptional opportunities for solo singing, choral singing, and dancing. Soprano **Meghan Lindsay** sings Dido and Tenor **Christopher Enns** sings Aeneas. Mireille Asselin takes the role of Belinda, with **Allyson McHardy** as the Sorceress—along with the **Toronto Children’s Chorus**.

“It seems only fitting that *Dido and Aeneas* be included in our 35th Anniversary,” says Pynkoski. “It was the first fully-staged opera undertaken by Opera Atelier — 35 years ago in the lecture hall of the Royal Ontario Museum.”

Opera Atelier’s first performance of the season will take place outside its hometown of Toronto in Città di Castello, Italy, as the company makes its debut performing alongside Canadian pianist Angela Hewitt at the Trasimeno Festival. Ms. Hewitt has invited Lajeunesse Zingg to choreograph and perform along with Artists of Atelier Ballet. Lajeunesse Zingg and Pynkoski will be joined by Canadian Soprano Mireille Asselin singing music by Purcell that demonstrates the influence of Baroque dancing on 17th and 18th century vocal music.

“It will be wonderful to explore the connection between dance and music in the Baroque Keyboard Suites, which have played such an important part in my career,” explains Hewitt. “For the audience to see these dances performed live and choreographed by an expert in Baroque dance, will be an event unique in the history of the Trasimeno Festival. The inclusion of Canadian Soprano Mireille Asselin will allow us to also explore how dance rhythms are exploited in the vocal music of the Baroque era. This program will be a unique opportunity to experience the interpretation of Baroque dance suites between three distinct performance disciplines.”

As part of the 35th Anniversary celebrations, Opera Atelier is thrilled to announce that Co-Artistic Directors Pynkoski and Lajeunesse Zingg have received the unprecedented recognition of being named Officers of the Order of Arts and Letters (Officiers dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres) by the Government of France.

At the request of Laurent Brunner, Director of Château de Versailles Spectacles, the ceremony of investiture will be held in December 2021 on the stage of the Royal Opera House in Versailles when Pynkoski and Lajeunesse Zingg return to mount a Château de Versailles production.

“We are deeply honoured to be recognized in this way by the country whose culture we most admire,” says Co-Artistic Director Lajeunesse Zingg.

**Subscriptions** for Opera Atelier's 2020/21 season are on sale January 28 at [operaatelier.com/subscribe](https://operaatelier.com/subscribe) or by calling: 416-703-3767 ext. 222.

**Single tickets** on sale in the summer of 2020.

**Subscriptions for Arts-Workers or Under 30** audiences can be purchased via email at [tickets@operaatelier.com](mailto:tickets@operaatelier.com) or by calling 416 703 3767 x222.

### **About Opera Atelier ([OperaAtelier.com](https://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 Co-Artistic Directors Marshall Pynkoski C.M. and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg C.M. were both awarded the Order of Canada for their contributions to opera and ballet, and were recently both named Officers of the Order of Arts and Letters (Officiers dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres) from the French Republic.

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's 35th Anniversary Season**

**Programs:**

*The Magic Flute* AND  
*The Angel Speaks / Dido and Aeneas*

**Dates:**

October 22–November 1, 2020 and February 20–27, 2021

**Venue:**

Elgin Theatre  
189 Yonge Street  
Toronto, ON M5B 1M4

**Ticket Prices:**

Subscriptions from \$104.  
Single tickets from \$42 (some fees may apply)

**Tickets and Info:**

[OperaAtelier.com](https://OperaAtelier.com)

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