

# **M A N O N**

by Jules Massenet

*Sung in French with English translation projected above the stage*

**November 21, 25 & 27, 2009**

***Oh despair! Our lives are divided for ever ("O douleur, l'avenir nous separe")***

Tempted by lust and wealth, as personified by the obsessive Des Grieux and the lecherous Guillot, *Manon* follows the twisted journey of decline for the morally conflicted country girl Manon. The music of Massenet is full-blown French romanticism with full, lush orchestration and passionate scenes of high drama.

## **S Y N O P S I S**

### **ACT I**

The stage is set in France, 1721, in the courtyard of an inn at Amiens. There, Guillot, an elderly roué, and his wealthy friend Bretigny have ordered dinner for three actresses of easy virtue, Poussette, Javotte and Rosette. The innkeeper is slow to arrive and they are impatient. With flustered apologies, the innkeeper ushers them in for their meal. As they retire, a young officer, Lescaut, comes to meet his cousin Manon, who is on her way to a convent. The coach carrying his cousin soon arrives and passengers pour out, impatient to collect their luggage and be home. Manon is among them, and excitedly tells Lescaut about her first trip away from home. While he looks after her luggage, Guillot, calling for more wine, notices the beautiful Manon and flirts with her, but she only laughs at the elderly man's advances. Lescaut returns, and before joining friends at a gaming table he warns Manon about the dangers of talking to strangers. Once Lescaut is gone, Manon wistfully compares her own bland future at the convent with the pleasure-filled life of Guillot and his glamorous companions. She is interrupted as the Chevalier Des Grieux arrives at the inn and, on seeing Manon, instantly falls in love with her. Seizing this opportunity to escape the convent, Manon suggests that they run off together and Des Grieux tantalizes Manon with dreams of a life in Paris. Together, they take Guillot's coach and the half drunk Guillot stumbles from the inn to hurl curses after the escaping pair, frustrated as he had intended to abduct Manon himself. When Lescaut discovers his cousin missing, he blames Guillot for her abduction.

### **ACT II**

In their Paris apartment, Manon and Des Grieux read a letter he has composed for his father asking permission to marry his love, Manon. As he goes to post the letter, Des Grieux notices a bouquet of flowers on the mantle. When he asks who has sent them, she lies to calm his jealousy. Lescaut and Brétigny arrive, the former to demand that Des Grieux marry Manon, the latter to tell the girl that Des Grieux is soon to be kidnapped by

his irate father. After the visitors depart, Des Grieux goes off to send the letter to his father. Left alone, Manon is unable to resist the temptation of luxury offered her by Brétigny and bids a heartfelt farewell to the life she shared with Des Grieux. The young man returns, relating an idyllic vision of their future life together, but officers suddenly force their way into the room and abduct him.

### **ACT III**

A holiday crowd fills a park at the Cours-la-Reine, where Pousette, Javotte and Rosette have eluded Guillot. Lescaut sentimentally addresses a pretty passerby as his beloved "Rosalinde," then generously offers her presents from the vendors' carts. Guillot pledges that he is over his love for Pousette, Javotte and Rosette to his friend Brétigny. Dismayed, Brétigny asks that Guillot not take his Manon away from him, and Guillot begins to scheme his revenge for being snubbed by Manon.

Manon, preens in the street, admired by passer-bys and sings a gavotte in praise of the wonders of youth and beauty. When Des Grieux's father, the Count, speaks with Brétigny, Manon overhears their conversation, and learns that Des Grieux is about to be inducted into the Church. She herself speaks to the Count and is piqued to hear that her former lover has closed his heart. Manon rushes to St. Sulpice.

In the chapel at St. Sulpice, women describe in awe the eloquence of the new abbé. Skeptical of his son's new virtue, the Count tries to persuade Des Grieux to abandon the church and marry a suitable girl. After the father leaves, Des Grieux prays for the strength to resist the memory of Manon. But Manon arrives, breaks his resolve with her ardor and persuades him to run away with her.

### **ACT IV**

In Hôtel de Transylvanie, a notorious gambling house, a crowd of gamblers gather, among them Lescaut, Guillot and the three actresses. When Des Grieux arrives with Manon, she pushes him to gamble back their fortune at the faro table. As the young man plays cards with Guillot, Manon and the actresses sing in praise of living for the moment. Guillot, losing every hand, accuses Des Grieux of cheating and goes off to summon the police; the authorities soon arrive and with them the Count Des Grieux, who rebukes his son but promises him that his arrest will be only temporary. Manon swoons as they are taken away.

### **ACT V**

Manon is to be deported to Louisiana on charges of immorality. On the road to Le Havre, where she must pass, Des Grieux and Lescaut bribe the guards to release her. Manon, weak and exhausted from consumption collapses in her lover's arms. Des Grieux, though despairing, comforts her as, murmuring of their lost happiness, she dies.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### **Nathalie Paulin**

Soprano  
Manon

Soprano **Nathalie Paulin** has established herself in Canada, the United States, Europe and the Far East as an interpretive artist of the very first rank. Winner of the 2005 Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding Opera Performance, she has collaborated with internationally renowned conductors including Jane Glover, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Andrew Parrott, Jonathan Darlington, Hervé Niquet, David Agler, Richard Bradshaw, Bernard Labadie, Mario Bernardi, Graeme Jenkins, Andrew Litton and Yoav Talmi on both the concert platform and in opera. Ms. Paulin debuted for L'Opéra de Montréal as Mélisande in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and for Chicago Opera Theater as Galatea in *Acis and Galatea*. She was re-engaged by Chicago Opera Theater for the title role in *Semele* and for Mary in *La Resurrezione*, both by Handel. She has also been heard as Constance in *Dialogues of the Carmelites* and Micaela in *Carmen* for Calgary Opera, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* for L'Opéra de Québec, and Susanna in *Le Nozze Di Figaro* for Cincinnati Opera. The Dallas Opera featured her in *Carmen* and *Cunning Little Vixen*.

### **Richard Troxell**

Tenor  
Chevalier Des Grieux

Richard Troxell's beautiful lyric tenor voice has been thrilling audiences wherever he has sung on stages around the world and in the United States. Richard Troxell's most recent engagements included Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* in a sold out début with Opéra de Montréal, a reprise of his role as Christian in *Cyrano de Bergerac* for Opéra de Monte Carlo, and the title role in *Zampa* at the Opéra Comique in Paris. Mr. Troxell's recording credits include the role of Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly* for the Sony label, the role of Beppe in *I pagliacci* under the baton of Georges Prêtre, and several compositions by American Jewish composers including *Masada* by Marvin David Levy with the Berlin Radio Symphony. He is the featured soloist on the sold-out CD *What A Wonderful World*.

### **Etienne Dupuis**

Baritone  
Lescart

Mr. Dupuis completed his studies in voice at McGill University where he appeared in productions of *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Cavalli's *La Calisto* and in the role of Belcore in *L'elisir d'amore*. He was a member of l'Atelier Lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal, where he performed Escamillo and Dancaïre in *Carmen* and Peter in *Hänsel und Gretel*. Mr. Dupuis sang frequently with l'Opéra de Montréal including roles in *Rigoletto*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *La bohème*. During their 2004-2005 season, he obtained roles in every production including Mandarino in *Turandot*, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* and Dancaïre in *Carmen*. Recently, Mr. Dupuis took on the role of Johnny Rockfort in the operatic version of *Starmania* for l'Opéra de Québec.

**Ty Paterson**

Conductor

One of Canada's leading opera conductors, Tyrone Paterson has led numerous performances throughout Europe, the United States, Asia and Canada. He has held the position of Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Opera Lyra Ottawa since 1998. OLO performs at the National Arts Centre of Canada with the National Arts Centre Orchestra in the pit. Under his guidance, OLO has experienced considerable growth and is now recognized as one of the country's leading opera companies. His first appearance with Opera Lyra Ottawa was in 1994 conducting *Tosca* and he has since led many of the company's greatest successes. He also serves as Music Advisor and Principal Conductor for Manitoba Opera and as an Artistic Advisor to Opera Hong Kong. Maestro Paterson last conducted *Turandot* (2005) for Calgary Opera.

**Brian Deedrick**

Stage Director

Edmonton Opera Artistic Director Brian Deedrick, a long-time favourite of Calgary Opera, has directed past productions of *The Magic Flute*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Don Giovanni*, *Aida*, *La Bohème*, and more recently, *Lakmé*. Mr. Deedrick has directed for numerous opera companies, including Edmonton Opera, Pacific Opera, Opera Arizona, Opera Carolina, Opera Lyra Ottawa, He also directed a production of *Lakmé* for the International Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv, Israel. He last directed for Calgary Opera for *Turandot* (2005).

The Canadian premiere of  
**LITTLE WOMEN**

by Mark Adamo

*Sung in English with English text projected above the stage*

**January 30, February 3 & 5, 2010**

**"Now is all there is."**

Loyalty, innocence, sacrifice, family bonds and personal fulfillment are explored in this coming-of-age story that follows the knotted destinies of the four March sisters during the turbulent American Civil War period. The arias and ensembles are very melodic and tonal, and aptly communicate the strong emotions of the different characters.

## **S Y N O P S I S**

### **Massachusetts during the Civil War 1861-1865**

#### **Prologue**

In the dark attic of the March house, Jo sits, tired and depressed, writing in her notebook. Her childhood friend Laurie opens the attic door and it is revealed that he has married Jo's younger sister, Amy. The two argue, and it becomes apparent that they cared deeply for each other, but something has kept them apart. Frustrated, Jo turns back time to discover happier, lighter memories.

#### **ACT I**

Jo is still in the attic, but it is two years earlier, and she and her sisters Meg, Beth, and Amy are teasing each other while doing their chores. The game is truth or fabrication, and Laurie has to learn the game for the first time. After the game, Laurie tauntingly tells Jo that his tutor, John Brooke, keeps Meg's glove because he loves her. Jo, alone, sketching a story, fearfully denies that Meg might love him too.

Two weeks later, in front of the March house Mr. Brooke courts Meg while Jo and Laurie watch, hidden. Jo urges the family to reject him and it is decided that Meg is too young to be married. When Mr. Brooke returns, Meg begins to reject him but is interrupted by Cecilia, the girls' aunt. As Cecilia scorns Mr. Brooke for being poor, Meg becomes resolved to accept him. Her family celebrates; but Jo accuses Meg of abandoning her.

The following summer, in the March family garden, preparations for the wedding are being made. Meg and Brooke adapt their parents wedding vows. A feverish Laurie

pleads for Jo's love. She spurns him; stung, he flees. Beth, secretly ill, collapses as Meg cries for help.

## **ACT II**

One year later, in the offices of the Daily Volcano, a New York City fiction tabloid, a triumphant Jo sells a story. She has moved to the city to give Laurie time to forget about his proposal to her. Back at her boarding house, she writes to her increasingly fragmented family. The letters reveal that Meg now has twins, and Amy is visiting England. Later that night, a new acquaintance, Friedrich Bhaer, invites Jo to join him at the opera.

At the boarding house, Jo and Friedrich Bhaer engage in a flirtatious debate, while simultaneously in Oxford, Amy tests Laurie's feelings for Jo. At home, Beth rages at the piano, flinging herself at the keys. Mr. Bhaer ardently recites Goethe to Jo but is interrupted by Alma's desperate telegram. Jo spurns Mr. Bhaer and flees to Concord.

Three sleepless nights later, Beth dozes as her family keeps vigil. Jo bursts in; Beth bids her family leave. Beth urges Jo to accept her impending death, while Jo rages against the unfairness of it. Beth falls asleep and gently dies.

At the March house, the following spring, Cecilia baits Jo with Amy's letter of happiness together with Laurie. Cecilia reveals that she has revised her will so all her property will pass to Jo and tries to convince her of the allure of solitude. Refusing, Jo retreats to the attic.

As in the beginning, Jo, distraught, stands in the attic alone. Laurie, appearing, again reminisces; but now Jo rejects the past. Her sisters materialize as memories: Jo, in emotional exorcism, celebrates and releases them. Bhaer — her future — appears and Jo extends her hand to him.

# CAST BIOGRAPHIES

## **Allyson McHardy**

Mezzo-Soprano

Jo

Mezzo-soprano Allyson McHardy is "a singer of enormous imagination and versatility" in the words of the San Francisco Chronicle. An alumna of the prestigious Merola Program, Ms. McHardy debuted as Olga in *Eugene Onegin* for the San Francisco Opera in the fall of 2004 and was immediately re-engaged to be heard as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in the 2006-07 season. She appeared as Flosshilde and Rossweisse in the Canadian Opera Company's first Canadian *Ring Cycle* in the new Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. 2005-2006 included Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* for l'Opéra de Québec, Flosshilde in *Götterdämmerung* and Magret in *Wozzeck* for the Canadian Opera Company. Upcoming engagements include Dalilah in *Samson et Dalilah* at Opera Ontario with Richard Margison and Handel's *Israel in Egypt* with Les Violons du Roi.

## **Krisztina Szabó**

Mezzo-Soprano

Meg

Canadian Mezzo-Soprano Krisztina Szabó has become a highly sought-after artist in both North America and Europe. The Chicago Tribune recently exclaimed, for her performances of Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, "Krisztina Szabó stole every scene with her powerful, mahogany voice and deeply poignant immersion in the empress' plight." She made her Lincoln Center debut as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at the Mostly Mozart Festival where she was praised in the New York Times for being "clear, strong, stately and an endearingly vulnerable Dorabella." Krisztina Szabó's 2007-08 season was highlighted by performances of new roles: Komponist in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with Stadttheater Klagenfurt in Austria, and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in her fourth production with Chicago Opera Theater. She also appeared with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra as soloist in Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*, L'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec in Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, the San Antonio Symphony for a performance of Handel's *Messiah*, and the Talisker Players in Toronto for an evening of chamber music. Ms. Szabó is appearing as Rosina in Calgary Opera's *The Barber of Seville* this April.

## **Mariateresa Margisano**

Soprano

Beth

Mariateresa is a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. In 2001, she debuted with the New York City Opera as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, a role she also sang with Vancouver Opera and Opera Columbus. Recently, Mariateresa performed Micaela in Vancouver Opera's *Carmen* (2009); and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Opera Lyra Ottawa (2008). Mariateresa sang the title role in Thomas' *Mignon* in an "Opera in concert" with Opera Lyra Ottawa (2007); and covered the role of Fidelia in Puccini's *Edgar* with the Opera Orchestra of New York (2008). Career highlights include: Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Vancouver Opera, Despina in *Così Fan Tutte* with Arizona Opera, Gretel in *Hansel & Gretel* with Calgary Opera and Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera Lyra Ottawa, Buffalo Philharmonic, Aspen Opera Theater and Opera Saskatchewan.

## **Catherine May**

Soprano

Amy

Catherine May was born and educated in Canada before completing her studies in the UK. Operatic performances in 2008 included Olympia/Antonia/Giulietta for MidWales Opera, and Pretty Polly (cover) and Cunegonde (cover) for English National Opera. Other recent roles have included Queen of the Night *The Magic Flute* (English Touring Opera), Zerbinetta *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Britten-Pears Young Artists Programme), Mimi *La Bohème* (British Youth Opera, Scottish Opera on Tour), Blonde *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Diva Opera). Concert performances include *Carmina Burana* for the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* at the Aldeburgh Festival, and Poulenc's *Gloria* and Jenkins' *The Armed Man* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Ms. May is delighted to return to Calgary Opera, where she sang Frasquita in *Carmen* and Naiad in *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

## **Elizabeth Turnbull**

Mezzo-Soprano

Alma March

A Winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions, North American finalist in the International Bernstein Song and Oratorio Competition, and recipient of a Canada Council Career Development grant, Ms. Turnbull is a mezzo with a distinguished reputation in the U.S. and Canada, hailed by the press as "(one) of this country's finest singers, luminous and rich-voiced". Her 2008-2009 season included *Messiah* at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Regina Symphony, *Madam Larina* in *Eugene Onegin* for Opera Lyra Ottawa, a concert featuring the music of Mendelssohn for the Aldeburgh Connection and Schafer's *Adieu*, *Robert Schumann* for the Ottawa Symphony. In the U.S., she sang in Bach's WEIHNACHTSORATORIUM (Nicholas McGegan and San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque) and MESSIAH for Los Angeles' Musica Angelica. Most recently she created *Elizabeth I* in *Frobisher* and performed *Augusta Tabor* in *The Ballad of Baby Doe* for Calgary Opera.

## **Kimberly Barber**

Mezzo-Soprano

Cecilia March

Canadian mezzo-soprano Kimberly Barber is known for the expressive power, purity and refinement of her voice, her elegance of phrasing and musical gesture and the intelligence and intensity of her physical portrayals. Ms Barber's recent seasons have held important role debuts. She garnered great praise for her first *Charlotte* in Massenet's *Werther* with Vancouver Opera, and created the role of *Jessica* in the world premiere of John Estacio's *Frobisher* for Calgary Opera. Her critically acclaimed first turn as *Sister Helen* in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* was a feature of the Canadian premiere of that work for Calgary Opera, performances of which were broadcast on CBC's *Saturday Afternoon at the Opera*. This was followed by her return to Seattle Opera, and first bows as *Despina* in Jonathan Miller's acclaimed production of *Così Fan Tutte*. She gave her first performances of the role of *The Angel* in Edward Elgar's oratorio *Dream of Gerontius*, with the Richard Eaton Singers in Edmonton, a work which will signal her debut with the Elora Festival in the summer of 2007.

## **Colin Ainsworth**

Tenor

Laurie

Praised for his “ability to move seamlessly between different areas of the repertoire”, Mr. Ainsworth is eagerly sought out for his interpretations of operas ranging from the early operas of Monteverdi to the contemporary operas of Britten. This season, he made his debuts with Manitoba Opera in the world premiere of Victor Davies’ opera, *The Transit of Venus* as Desmarais, Ralph Rackstraw in *H.M.S. Pinafore* and Fenton in Verdi’s *Falstaff* both with Edmonton Opera, Jaquino in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* with Vancouver Opera, Rinuccio in Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi* and Ching’s *Buoso’s Ghost* and Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance* with Lake George Opera. He also made critically acclaimed debuts last season with the Royal Opera House and the Edinburgh International Festival in the world première of Stuart MacRae’s opera *The Assassin Tree* as Youth and the Greek National Opera to sold-out houses singing Orphée in Gluck’s Paris version of *Orphée et Euridice*, a role he reprised with Opera Atelier under the baton of Andrew Parrott. He also made his debut with L’Opéra Français de New York as Castor in *Castor et Pollux*, conducted by Yves Abel, joined the Montreal Baroque Festival in Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* and was lauded by the Toronto Star as being “every inch the prince, and his lyric voice a golden treasure” for his role as Tamino in *The Magic Flute* with Opera Atelier.

## **Daniel Okulitch**

Bass-Baritone

Friedrich Bhaer

Bass-Baritone Daniel Okulitch first came to national attention on Broadway as Schaunard in Baz Luhrmann's production of *La Bohème*—a role he repeated when the production traveled to Los Angeles, for which he received the Ovation Award for Best Ensemble Performance from the Los Angeles Stage Alliance. He has since begun an international career with opera companies and orchestras throughout Europe and North America, and is lauded as much for his powerful stage presence and dramatic abilities as for his “focused, resonant bass-baritone that he wields with power and sensitivity” (NJ Star-Ledger) His signature roles show a dedication to both old and new works, including the title role in *Don Giovanni* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Joseph DeRocher in *Dead Man Walking* and Olin Blitch in *Susannah*. He performed last for Calgary Opera in *Dead Man Walking* (2006).

## **Gordon Gerrard**

Conductor

A graduate of the respected vocal accompanying program at Manhattan School of Music, Gordon Gerrard maintains a busy schedule as a recital partner, vocal coach and conductor. Mr. Gerrard has served as a conductor for Opera NUOVA (Edmonton) since 2001 and as Resident Conductor and Répétiteur for Calgary Opera for the past two seasons. Conducting credits include the European Music Academy in the Czech Republic, and assistant conductor for Opera Lyra Ottawa. When not performing, Mr. Gerrard works as a vocal coach, and has held the positions of lecturer at Iowa State University, répétiteur for Vancouver Opera, Associate Music Director and Chorus Master of the Manhattan School of Music Undergraduate Opera Studio. While at Calgary Opera, Maestro Gerrard has conducted *Le Portrait de Manon*, *La Divina* and *L’enfant et les sortilèges*.

**Kelly Robinson**

Stage Director

Kelly Robinson is a director and choreographer whose career spans opera, theatre, film and television. He has worked extensively in the United States with critically acclaimed productions of *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Bohème* and *La Belle Hélène* for the opera companies of Dallas, Utah, Portland and Arizona to his credit. In Canada, he has presented opera audiences in Edmonton, Victoria, Calgary, Winnipeg and Vancouver with new productions of works ranging from *Les Pêcheurs de péries* and *Eugene Onegin* to Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* and Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Mr. Robinson's work has been seen at the National Arts Centre (Ottawa), Canadian Stage Company (Toronto), the Palace Theatre (New York), the Vineyard Theatre (New York) and the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre. He is currently Director of the Opera as Theatre Program and Director of Theatre Arts at The Banff Centre. Mr. Robinson has directed many productions for Calgary Opera including *Filumena*, *Frobisher*, *Sweeny Todd*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

# D O N G I O V A N N I

by W. A. Mozart

*Sung in Italian with English translation projected above the stage*

**April 24, 28 & 30, 2010**

## ***The death of a sinner always reflects his life (Questo è il fin)***

Seduction, betrayal, manipulation, amorality, arrogance, bullying; It's all in a day's work for Don Giovanni. And to Hell with the consequences. Mozart provides a rich and complex examination of pure impenitent carnal tenacity. The operas of Mozart, and especially this one, achieve greatness through the combination of great tunes (ones that you can whistle!) and an infectious rhythmic energy throughout.

*"In this production we will strip the story bare of its supernatural elements – rather focussing on the complexities of heart and mind that fuel the action of all the characters through an intense 24-hour period.*

*"Set in a coldly anonymous glass and steel office tower - the kind of building found in a major urban centre - the opera opens with a heart-stopping murder and ends with the destruction of an all-too-human man. This Don is a man whose boundless and self-destructive appetites of all kinds fuel a heedlessly chaotic descent into death. It is a contemporary revisioning of the story where the women he has used so carelessly have the strength and willpower to plot his downfall."*

~Stage Director, **Glynis Leyshon**

## **S Y N O P S I S**

### **ACT I**

It's evening in a downtown office tower, with most of the office staff gone home for the night. Outside the Chairman of the Board's office, where a Board meeting is taking place, Leporello complains about his duties as personal assistant to Don Giovanni, a rising young executive. Into the dark atrium Giovanni appears, pursued by Anna, the Chairman's daughter, whom he has tried to seduce. Anna desperately tries to see the face of the man who has attacked her, evidentially running for help. When the Chairman himself appears in answer to Anna's cries, he is killed by Giovanni in an act of bravado. Taking the weapon with him, he escapes. Anna and her fiancé, Ottavio return to find her father dead and she makes Ottavio swear that he'll discover the assassin and bring him to justice.

Seemingly unaffected by his heinous crime, Giovanni is found flirting with an attractive secretary. She turns out to be Elvira, a woman who is not a secretary at all, but a well respected business consultant with whom he once had a brief affair. She has tracked him down and is determined to either claim his heart or get revenge for his abandoning her. As she begins to accuse him, Giovanni calls on Leporello to distract her while he makes a prudent departure.

Meanwhile, the cleaning and maintenance staff are having a party to celebrate the engagement of two of their members, Zerlina and Masetto, who met while working at the company. Giovanni crashes the private get-together and is immediately struck by Zerlina's beauty. He decides that she must be his next conquest. As he employs his charms on the future bride, her groom becomes angry but is somehow convinced to enjoy Giovanni's hospitality in the now deserted Board Room. Alone with Zerlina, Giovanni begins to push his advantage, but Elvira interrupts and protectively whisks the girl away. When Elvira returns to denounce him as a heartless seducer, Giovanni then finds himself trying to convince Anna, now in mourning, and Ottavio that Elvira is lying. Declaring Elvira mad, he leads her off. Anna, having recognized his voice, realizes that Giovanni is her father's murderer and vows revenge. Ottavio remains unconvinced, finding it almost impossible to believe his colleague capable of such brutal actions.

Giovanni, fuelled with alcohol and adrenal, continues to flirt with danger. Instead of fleeing he remains on the hunt, determined to enjoy as many women as possible. Outside in the hall, Zerlina begs Masetto to forgive her seeming infidelity. Masetto, not easily consoled, hides around the corner as he hears Giovanni approach. When Giovanni moves in on Zerlina, Masetto reveals himself and accuses him of trying to seduce his fiancée. Using his seemingly limitless charm, Giovanni diffuses the situation and the three of them return to Giovanni's impromptu party together. Elvira, Anna and Ottavio arrive disguised and Leporello invites them to join the party.

During the festivities, Leporello distracts Masetto so his boss, Giovanni, can take Zerlina to his office where he brutally attacks her. When the girl's cries for help bring everyone to his office, Giovanni tries to blame Leporello, but no one is convinced. By this point they know what kind of man Giovanni is. Elvira, Anna and Ottavio tear away their disguises and confront Giovanni, who barely escapes the angry crowd.

## **ACT II**

In the darkness of the hallway, Leporello exchanges suits with Giovanni in order to woo Elvira in his boss' place. For Leporello, this is one of the perks of his sometimes distasteful job, and leads Elvira off. Giovanni is then free to serenade Elvira's assistant to his heart's content. When Masetto passes him with a crowd of cleaning staff bent on revenge, the disguised rake gives them false directions. Once Giovanni is alone with Masetto, he punches and kicks him, leaving him moaning on the floor. Zerlina arrives and tenderly consoles her fiancé.

Elvira and Leporello are surprised by Anna, Ottavio, Zerlina and Masetto, who, mistaking Leporello for his wayward employer, threaten him. Frightened by their aggression, he reveals his true identity and takes off down the hall. Ottavio says with bold assertion that he is now sure that Giovanni is the murderer for whom he has searched. They commit themselves to avenging the murder and plot together to punish Giovanni. With this,

everyone leaves, save Elvira, who is frustrated by yet another humiliation by Giovanni. In a passionate aria, she voices her rage.

Trying to clean himself after the debauchery of his wild escapades, Giovanni assures a frightened Leporello that all is well. Seemingly out of nowhere, a voice then warns Giovanni of his doom. Filled with confidence, Giovanni proposes that Leporello invite the disembodied voice to join him for dinner in his office. When the assistant reluctantly stammers an invitation to join him for a meal, the voice accepts.

In her office, Anna mourns her murdered father. Seizing the moment, Ottavio proposes that they be married at once, but Anna needs revenge first and she puts off Ottavio until her father sees justice. Anna, Masetto, Zerlina and Ottavio move to complete the downfall of Giovanni.

In the darkened parking garage of the office tower, Elvira rushes in begging Giovanni, whom she still loves, to seek forgiveness. But he waves her out contemptuously. At the door, a scream is heard and Giovanni reacts with more bravado...he remains unrepentant and refuses to succumb to fear and remorse, even in the face of death. Intent on revenge, the group, lead by Masetto, dispatch the lecherous man and his body is disposed of like so much unwanted trash.

As a strange calm settles in the wake of their secret murder, the others plan their future and recite the moral: such is the fate of an evildoer and those who live their lives as villains will always be punished.

## C A S T   B I O G R A P H I E S

### **Brett Polegato**

Baritone

Don Giovanni

Brett Polegato's artistic sensibility has earned him the highest praise from audiences and critics: "his is a serious and seductive voice" says *The Globe and Mail*, and *The New York Times* has praised him for his "burnished, well-focused voice" which he uses with "considerable intelligence and nuance." At the Inaugural Gala Concert for the Canadian Opera Company's new home, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, he "nearly stole the show with a strong and characterful performance of Figaro's cocky *Largo al factotum*." He has already appeared on several of the world's most distinguished stages in 19 countries, including those of Lincoln Center, La Scala, the Concertgebouw, the Opéra National de Paris, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, the Teatro Real, Roy Thomson Hall, the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall, and can be heard as soloist in the Grammy Awards' Best Classical Recording of 2003 - Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* (Telarc) with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Robert Spano. For Calgary Opera, Mr. Polegato most recently appeared in *Cinderella* (2006).

### **Lyne Fortin**

Soprano

Donna Anna

Lyne Fortin is one of Canada's leading sopranos, with appearances with L'Opera de Montreal in the title roles of *Agrippina*, *Thais*, *La Traviata* and *Romeo et Juliette*, Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Leila in *Les Pecheurs des Perles*, Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Olga in *Fedora*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, and Micaela in *Carmen*, Vancouver Opera as Mimi, Leila and Micaela, Opera Saskatchewan, Calgary Opera and Edmonton Opera as Violetta in *La Traviata*, Opera de Quebec as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Mimi, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*. Last season, she will return to Montreal and to Opera Ontario as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*. This past season, she made her role debut in the title role of *Carmen* for the Edmonton Opera, and return to L'Opera de Montreal and Opera de Quebec as "Stella Starlight" in the spectacle *Starmania*.

### **Laura Whalen**

Soprano

Donna Elvira

In a short span of time Laura Whalen has made her mark as a Lyric Soprano whose performances are notable for beauty of tone and musical finesse. Ms. Whalen's career highlights have included her role in *La Bohème* as Mimi for Pacific Opera Victoria, the Governor General's Award telecast from the National Arts Centre conducted by Mario Bernardi, and performances for Opera Ontario, Opera Lyra Ottawa, and the Canadian Opera Company. She also toured Europe with the Caritatis Choir singing Brahms' *Requiem* in Helsinki, Tallinn and St. Petersburg, and has been featured by the Quebec Symphony, Calgary Philharmonic and Hamilton Philharmonic. For Calgary Opera Ms. Whalen created the title role of the world premiere of *Filumena* by Estacio and Murrell (2003), performed the

role of Pamina in *The Magic Flute* (2006), created the role of Anna in the world premiere of *Frobisher* (2007) and most recently played Marguerite in *Faust* (2008).

### **Kathleen Brett**

Soprano  
Zerlina

Canadian soprano Kathleen Brett is cherished by audiences in America and Europe not only for the beauty of her tone and stylistic instinct but also for her natural stage presence and dramatic skills. Ms. Brett performs with many opera companies in the Americas and Europe, among them: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Dallas, New York (City Opera), London (Covent Garden) and Antwerp (Vlaamse Opera). She enjoys collaboration with many of the leading conductors and directors of our day. Also an accomplished concert singer Miss Brett has appeared with every major Canadian orchestra and with many of the finest in the United States. Appearing regularly at the festivals of Ravinia (Chicago), Meadowbrook, (Detroit) and Riverbend, (Cincinnati) she is also featured in the Cincinnati Pops Grammy nominated recording (Telarc) of Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* in the role of Marian the Librarian under Erich Kunzel. In recital, Miss Brett toured the U.K. with the Aldeburgh Connection of Toronto with whom she has recorded the Brahms and Schumann Liebeslieder.

Recent engagements include the role of Blanche in *The Dialogues of the Carmelites* with Vancouver Opera; Musetta in *La Boheme* with Edmonton Opera and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Manitoba Opera as well as concert appearances with both Cincinnati Pops and Toronto Symphony.

### **Benjamin Butterfield**

Tenor  
Don Ottavio

The Canadian tenor, Benjamin Butterfield, enjoys an international career as one of Canada's most successful and sought-after artists. He has performed to critical acclaim throughout North America and Europe and most recently also in Israel and New Zealand. The San Francisco Examiner has described him as "...a master of [Bach] literature..." Regarded as a "musically arresting presence" by the San Francisco Chronicle, he is in demand for concert, opera and recital. Benjamin Butterfield's operatic credits include debuts in *The Barber of Seville* under Carlo Rizzi at Welsh National Opera, *The Magic Flute* with New York City Opera, *Tamerlano*, directed by Jonathan Miller, at Glimmerglass Opera conducted by Jane Glover and in *Die Fledermaus* with Edmonton opera. His stage repertoire has encompassed roles in the *Così fan tutte*, *Don Pasquale*, *Cunning Little Vixen*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Barber of Seville*, *Don Giovanni*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Rake's Progress*, *Persephone*, and *Tamerlano*.

### **Alexander Dobson**

Baritone  
Masetto

The British-Canadian Baritone Alexander Dobson has been praised for his musicality and dramatic awareness on both opera and concert stages. Recent highlights include his riveting portrayal of Wozzek conducted by Yannick Nezet-Seguin in Montreal for which he was lauded for his "gripping embodiment of Wozzeck." Other recent operatic performances include Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* with Opera Hamilton and Mercutio in *Roméo et Juliette* for L'Opera de Montreal. He made his Royal Opera Covent Garden debut with *The Midnight*

*Court* by Ana Sokolovic. Mr. Dobson has been broadcast in BRAVO's TV rendition of *La Bohème* as Marcello, and on CBC Radio in various recitals. He has performed Schubert's *Die Winterreise* in England, Paris, Montreal, Vancouver, Victoria and Toronto.

### **Nathan Berg**

Bass

Leporello

With a "first-class voice" (*The Boston Globe*), Nathan Berg has emerged as one of the most in-demand bass-baritones of his generation. Berg enjoys a versatile career that incorporates a balance of concert, recital and operatic performances. With repertoire ranging from Bach and Handel to Mozart and Mahler, he has travelled extensively to perform with such conductors as Abbado, Boulez, Christie, Davis, Dohnanyi, Dutoit, Eschenbach, Haenchen, Harding, Herreweghe, Hogwood, King, Leppard, Lockhart, Masur, Maazel, Norrington, Rilling, Salonen, Slatkin and Tilson-Thomas. Mr. Berg's operatic credits include the roles of Figaro, Leporello, Ferrando (*Il Trovatore*), Mercurio (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Schaunard and Coline (*La Bohème*), Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*) and many more at companies including the Canadian Opera Company, English National Opera, Glyndebourne, New York City Opera, Opera de Paris, Bayerische Staatsoper, Vancouver Opera and Netherlands Opera.

### **Robert Dean**

Conductor

Robert Dean studied piano, horn, composition, and conducting as a Junior Exhibitioner at London's Royal College of Music, and went on to gain his music degree at Durham University, where he was the first student to act as Assistant Chorus Master to the University Chorus. He continued his studies at The Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, and the National Opera Studio, London as both répétiteur and baritone, and there followed a highly successful nine-year career as a baritone, singing major roles with all the principal opera houses in the UK. Since 1993 Robert Dean has enjoyed a busy freelance conducting schedule, particularly in the opera world, and also with choirs such as the world-renowned Philharmonia Chorus. In 1998 he was appointed Artistic Director to the Philharmonia Chorus. He has since conducted them in concerts including Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* with the Philharmonia Orchestra, *Messiah* with the London Mozart Players, Handel's *Dixit Dominus* with London Musici, Rachmaninov's *Vespers*, and, most recently *The Dream of Gerontius*. With Calgary Opera he conducted *Cinderella* (2006), *The Magic Flute* (2006) and most recently *Tosca* (2008).

### **Glynis Leyshon**

Stage Director

Glynis Leyshon, Artistic Director of the Playhouse Theatre Company (Vancouver) since 1997, has directed for theatre companies across the country. Ms. Leyshon also has extensive experience directing musicals and opera, having worked with the Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Pacific Opera companies. This season she will be directing Morris Panych in *Vigil* for the Playhouse and Theatre Calgary, and will also direct a new production of *Don Giovanni* for Pacific Opera Victoria. Last season she directed *A Little Night Music* and *Vincent in Brixton* at the Playhouse, *Eugene Onegin* for Pacific Opera Victoria and *Falstaff* for Opera Lyra. Ms. Leyshon last directed *Cinderella* (2006) and *Rigoletto* (2007) for Calgary Opera. Calgary Opera is excited to have Ms. Leyshon back to create *Don Giovanni* along with Bretta Gerecke, who last collaborated on *Rigoletto* (2007).

**Bretta Gerecke**

Set Designer

Bretta Gerecke grew up in Winnipeg and has resided in Edmonton for the past 14 years. Ms. Gerecke is the resident designer at Catalyst Theatre where she has designed world premieres that have toured internationally. She also works regularly at the Citadel Theatre, CanStage, Workshop West Theatre, Edmonton Opera, the River City Shakespeare Festival, Theatre Calgary and the Globe Theatre. Ms. Gerecke is the recipient of ten Elizabeth Sterling Haynes Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Set and Lighting Design and the Enbridge Award for Best Emerging Artist, and was short-listed in 2006 for the prestigious Siminovitch Prize. Ms. Gerecke previously designed *Rigoletto* (2008) for Calgary Opera.