



NEW OPERA Wayne Strongman | Managing Artistic Director

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September 12, 2011

Tapestry announces Opera Briefs – A showcase of bite-size, world premiere operas created through its annual LibLab

TORONTO, ON... Tapestry New Opera is pleased to announce that the 2011/2012 season will open with the 11th annual instalment of *Opera Briefs*, a workshop production of scenes resulting from its 15th Composer-Librettist Laboratory (LibLab), September 23 & 24 at 7:30 pm at Theatre Passe Muraille Main Space. The writers chosen for the 2011 LibLab are **Sharon Bajer** (Winnipeg), **Nick Carpenter** (Montreal), **Sheldon Rosen** (Toronto), **Anusree Roy** (Toronto) and **Norman Yeung** (Toronto). Joining them are composers **Elisabeth Mehl Greene** (Boston), **Katya Pine** (Thornhill), **Darren Russo** (Montreal), **Jana Skarecky** (Binbrook) and **Christiaan Venter** (Calgary).

This year's *Opera Briefs* will be directed by **Sue Miner**, graduate of Tapestry's Directors Lab in 2002, and co-artistic director of Pea Green Theatre Group (with husband **Mark Brownell**, librettist for Tapestry's landmark production *Iron Road*). Répétiteurs for LibLab and Music Directors for *Opera Briefs* are **Christopher Foley** and **Jennifer Tung**.

Tapestry is thrilled to partner with the legendary Theatre Passe Muraille on the presentation of *Opera Briefs*.

"It is so wonderful to collaborate with Theatre Passe Muraille for our traditional season opening, always new and exciting, hot and very provocative," says Tapestry Artistic Director **Wayne Strongman**. "*Opera Briefs* appeals to a diverse and wide audience, something we share in common with TPM and it has truly outgrown our studio space at the Distillery. We look forward to returning to TPM (where our Dora Award-winning *Still the Night* was premiered) and raising the roof with our great singers!"

Andy McKim, Theatre Passe Muraille's Artistic Director explains, "For several years now we have been trying to find a way to collaborate with Canada's premiere new opera development company and now we are delighted that we have found a development based project that both Tapestry and TPM can share. This is the beginning of a long term relationship that is imagined by our two companies."

Tapestry Studio Company members **soprano Xin Wang**, **mezzo soprano Krisztina Szabo**, **tenor Keith Klassen** and **baritone Benjamin Covey** as resident singing actors for the LibLab, and all four will return to reprise these world premiere roles for *Opera Briefs*.

LibLab (Composer-Librettist Laboratory)

For most composers and writers the artistic process is a solitary one. Producers around the world agree that forming workable artistic partnerships between composers and playwrights is the single greatest challenge facing the development of new opera and music theatre. The Composer-Librettist Laboratory is Tapestry's response to this challenge. Initiated in 1995, the laboratory is an intensive workshop for composers and writers to explore the collaborative process. Currently, the program attracts participants from Canada, the United States, Germany, the UK and Scotland. It is also the model for the English National Opera Studio's All-in Opera, as well as Pacific Opera Victoria's Composer-Librettist Workshop.



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Tapestry's annual Composer-Librettist Laboratory provides creative artists with the opportunity to work with several partners in a short period of time, thereby developing techniques for effective collaboration. Throughout the program, writers and composers are partnered with one another for a forty-eight hour period. With input from music and stage directors, each pair writes a short operatic scene together and investigates the collaborative process. Their work is performed at the end of each pairing by a resident ensemble of singers and répétiteurs and then constructively critiqued by the group.

Since 1995, Tapestry has nurtured over 120 creative artists through this unique program. Previous LibLabs have yielded 45 creative teams, including international partnerships, many who currently have projects in development including: Juliet Palmer and Julie Salverson, Aaron Gervais and Colleen Murphy, Andrew Staniland and Jill Battson, Jeffrey Ryan and Michael Lewis MacLennan, and Marjorie Chan and John Harris.

Sign up for a [Studio Pass](#) to attend all 5 events in the season for 10% off the single ticket price.

Studio Passes

\$115 (includes HST) Regular

416.537.6066 x222 / studiopass@tapestrynewopera.com

Single Tickets

\$25 Regular / \$20 Student & Arts Worker

Box Office

416.504.7529 / artsboxoffice.ca

Opera Briefs PERFORMANCE DETAILS:

September 23, 24 at 7:30pm

Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Street

Writers: **Sharon Bajer** (Winnipeg), **Nick Carpenter** (Montreal), **Sheldon Rosen** (Toronto), **Anusree Roy** (Toronto) and **Norman Yeung** (Toronto)

Composers: Elisabeth Mehl Greene (Boston), Katya Pine (Thornhill), Darren Russo (Montreal), Jana Skarecky (Binbrook), Christiaan Venter (Calgary)

Director: Sue Miner

Assistant Director: Michael Mori*

Dramaturge: Michael J Albano

Musical Dramaturge: Wayne Strongman

Répétiteurs: Christopher Foley, Jennifer Tung

Cast: Xin Wang, Krisztina Szabo, Keith Klassen, Benjamin Covey

Lighting Designer: Kimberley Purtel

*Current leadership legacy candidate at Tapestry New Opera

The Composer-Librettist Laboratory is generously supported by Mr. Roger D. Moore

Opera Briefs is generously supported by the RBS Emerging Artist Program

ABOUT THE COMPANY



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Tapestry New Opera is an international home for new opera creation, development and performance through its unique and highly collaborative work process. Under the leadership of Managing Artistic Director Wayne Strongman, CM, Tapestry engages the hearts and minds of artists and audiences, using opera to interpret stories of our time. The Tapestry process begins at the annual Composer-Librettist Laboratory where writers and composers are introduced to collaborative creation. Successful partnerships move on to create one act operas, and then graduate to full-length works. Their Inside Opera Education Programme gives students the chance to discover their own stories and engage in the creation of new opera. Their children's operas, *Elijah's Kite* by Camyar Chai & James Rolfe and *Get Stuffed* by Alexis Diamond and Richard Payne have already toured to over 30,000 students across Ontario. Tapestry productions which have premiered to critical and popular acclaim include *Dark Star Requiem* by Jill Battson & Andrew Staniland (with the Gryphon Trio and Elmer Iseler Singers) and the Dora-Award winning *Sanctuary Song* by Abigail Richardson & Marjorie Chan (with Theatre Direct), both for Luminato, *The Shadow* by Alex Poch-Goldin & Omar Daniel, *Nigredo Hotel* by Ann-Marie MacDonald & Nic Gotham, *Elsewhereless* by Atom Egoyan & Rodney Sharman, *Still the Night* by Theresa Tova, *Facing South* by Don Hannah & Linda C. Smith and the Dora Award-winning *Iron Road* by composer Chan Ka Nin & librettist Mark Brownell.

Biography of Managing Artistic Director Wayne Strongman

One of Canada's most distinguished music directors, Wayne Strongman is a champion of Canadian writers and composers. As founding Managing Artistic Director of Tapestry New Opera, now in its 32nd season of innovative creation for the stage, he has commissioned and premiered over 30 new Canadian operas including the Cantonese-English *Iron Road* in 2001 (Brownell/Chan), *Facing South* (Hannah/Smith), *The Shadow* (Poch-Goldin/Daniel), *Sanctuary Song* (Chan/Richardson) and *Dark Star Requiem* (Battson/Staniland) –both for Luminato – and *Nigredo Hotel* (MacDonald/Gotham) which is the most frequently produced opera in Canadian history. In 2006 he premiered *Elijah's Kite* (Chai/Rolfe) in New York City in collaboration with the Manhattan School of Music.

Music Director/Dramaturge of Tapestry's Composer-Librettist Laboratory, Mr. Strongman has created a truly collaborative environment for an international roster of composers and writers. Of the over 120 creative artists who have been nurtured through this programme, over 40 have successfully brought original operas to stages across Canada and the USA, including at Tapestry. His commitment to a contemporary practice within the operatic art form has made Strongman a mentor to many Canadian singers. In 2007 he established the Tapestry New Work Studio Company as a performing resource for the new work creation process which has become Tapestry's unique calling. Mr. Strongman has brokered partnerships with several international companies to bring Canadian artists to a wider public, notably English National Opera (London) Scottish Opera (Glasgow), and American Opera Projects (New York).

For fourteen seasons, Mr. Strongman was the celebrated Artistic Director of the Bach Elgar Choir, performing an annual concert series at Hamilton Place in addition to feature events like the unveiling of the Bombardier Global Express Jet (with the Toronto Symphony) and the Canada Day celebrations on Parliament Hill in the presence of HM Queen Elizabeth II. A noted choral specialist, he has also conducted and commissioned numerous Canadian premieres for the CBC: Harry Somers' *Chura-Churum*, Maryan Mozetich's *Death and the Morningstar*, Harry Freedman's *Fanfares*, and Christos Hatzis' *Kyrie* and *In memoriam Elmer Iseler*. Mr. Strongman volunteers as the choral conductor for the Regent Park School of Music and has presided over the choir's remarkable rise to fame, performing for the Governor General's Arts Awards at the NAC, Prime Minister Jean Chretien's farewell at the Air Canada Centre and the opening of the Blue Jays Season at the Rogers Centre. They have performed with many outstanding Canadian artists including Jackie Richardson and the Barenaked Ladies. Under his tutelage, the school now boasts its first graduate to pursue university education in operatic studies with full academic scholarship.

Mr. Strongman has led a number of festivals across the province as Artistic Director, including the Quinte Summer Music Festival and the Algoma Fall Festival. Mr. Strongman has served on both the Ontario Region and National Council of the



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Canadian Music Centre and was honoured in 2009 as one of 50 CMC Ambassadors for his dedication to the performance of music by Canadian composers.

On December 30, 2009 Her Excellency The Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, appointed Mr. Strongman as a Member of the Order of Canada.

2011/2012 SEASON AT A GLANCE

Tapestry is in a development season. Studio Passes and Single Tickets are available for 5 events at Tapestry:

Opera Briefs

September 23 & 24, 2011

Presented at Theatre Passe Muraille Main Space

Pub Operas

November 10, 11 & 12, 2011

Ernest Balmer Studio at Tapestry

Written by David Brock & Composed by Gareth Williams

Commissioned and premiered by NOISE at Sloan's Bar, Glasgow, July 2011

(Creative Match made in the 2010 LibLab)

The Tapestry Songbook

January 28, 2012

Ernest Balmer Studio at Tapestry

New Opera Showcase

March 2012

Ernest Balmer Studio at Tapestry

The Enslavement & Liberation of Oksana G. Workshop

June 2012

Ernest Balmer Studio at Tapestry

Written by Colleen Murphy & Composed by Aaron Gervais

(Creative Match made in the 2007 LibLab)

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For further media information and artist interviews please contact Kim Blackwell at
416-346-4709, 416-686-0982 or blackwellcommunications@gmail.com