



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Tapestry continues its 30th Anniversary celebrations with a \$250,000 anonymous gift and the establishment of new memorial fund

TORONTO, ON...On the heels of his own appointment to the Order of Canada on December 30th, Founding and Managing Artistic Director Wayne Strongman announced today that Tapestry new opera works has launched a new programme and a new fund. First Tapestry has just received its largest individual gift to date, \$250,000 from an anonymous donor to fund the **Leadership Legacy Programme**. Over the next three years, 6 mid-career arts professionals will be given the opportunity for a 3-month residency at Tapestry as Associate Managing Artistic Director, a position which is intended to grow the company's artistic capacity and to provide leadership succession for the future. Second, in honour of the company's late Past President and esteemed champion **Sylvia Morawetz**, Tapestry has initiated the **Sylvia Morawetz Memorial Fund** to provide access to the **INside Opera Education Programme** for children living in Toronto's Regent Park neighbourhood.

"My interest in human resource management is an extension of the deep and trusting relationships I have built with musicians and singers from an early age. By extension, that is how I try to manage my business relationships, beginning with the staff and board and by extension to my colleagues in other companies around the world. Further, the invention of a vocabulary to make the development of new operas practical and successful has been built over 20 years of relationships with playwrights and composers, directors, designers, and of course the performers. It is truly a collegial world I inhabit. We hope that through this programme we will identify a future leader who will welcome the rare opportunity to join a well-established organization where they will be enabled to realize both their artistic vision and the business practice that will make it possible." **Wayne Strongman**

Leadership Legacy Programme

This exciting new program will be a unique opportunity for six Associate Managing Artistic Directors to train under one of Canada's most important opera leaders, Wayne Strongman. Over a period of three years six Artistic Administrators will train to become Managing Artistic Directors through the **Leadership Legacy Programme**, one of the first of its kind in the arts sector. The \$250,000 donation which will fund this program is the largest single donation in Tapestry new opera's history.

Tapestry occupies a unique position as the leader of new work development in the Canadian opera sector and centers its operations on a philosophy of collaboration with its internationally renowned Composer-Librettist Laboratory and New Work Studio Company.

As a 30 year company with a Founding Artistic Director/Conductor who has always been intimately involved with the operational side of the company's \$1.2 million business, and who has occupied the unique role of Managing Artistic Director for the past 5 years, Tapestry is reasonably concerned with leadership succession planning. With the assistance of this major donation Tapestry will engage a series of mid-career arts professionals to assist the company in creating the appropriate job description for an eventual successor and a strong future for the leading Canadian company dedicated to the creation, development and performance of new opera works.

Sylvia Morawetz Memorial Fund

The Arts sector, and Tapestry in particular, were saddened in April of 2009 by the untimely passing of arts enthusiast Sylvia Morawetz. Ms. Morawetz was President of Tapestry's Board of Directors for two successive three-year terms. She led by example with great panache, bringing friends and business associates from widely diverse



fields to experience Tapestry productions. During her tenure, she presided over Tapestry's coming of age, beginning with the huge undertaking of developing and producing *Iron Road* (Mark Brownell and Chan Ka Nin), a millennium project that celebrated the contribution of Chinese labourers to the building of the CPR. Sylvia's gracious presence welcomed both Governor General Adrienne Clarkson and Lieutenant Governor Hilary Weston at the opening night receptions. Soon after, Tapestry took up residence in its first permanent home at the Distillery Historic District and produced *Facing South* (Don Hannah and Linda Catlin Smith) in a former munitions plant on the portlands.

But, it was Sylvia's political savvy that served the company so well during these critical years. She was always capable of seeing the "up-side", no matter how dour the news, a quality never more evident than in her steady e-mail reporting to friends and family of the progress of the cancer, each message accompanied by a flower companion. No matter how disappointing the news, she could find something positive to pass along. As Past President, she worked as a team player with the incoming President, Eric Adelman, and continued to attend Tapestry events including the recent *Opera to Go* Gala on March 27th, 2009. Tapestry was not the only organization to benefit from Sylvia's generosity. She also put her volunteer energy into supporting the Regent Park School of Music, and was a leader in establishing the first school of its kind in one of Toronto's priority neighbourhoods. The **Sylvia Morawetz Legacy Fund** will support access to Tapestry's INside Opera Education Programme for children living in Regent Park and will be a fitting tribute to this exceptional woman.

Tapestry new opera works

Now celebrating its 30th Anniversary, Tapestry is dedicated to the creation, development and performance of new opera works through its unique and highly collaborative work process. Under the leadership of Managing Artistic Director Wayne Strongman, Tapestry engages the hearts and minds of artists and audiences on subjects relevant to contemporary society. 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 15-minute operas for our annual Opera to Go production and graduate to full-length works. Our INside Opera Education Programme gives students the chance to discover their own stories and engage in the creation of new opera. Our 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 the Dora-Award winning *Sanctuary Song* by Abigail Richardson & Marjorie Chan (with Theatre Direct and Luminato), *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.

www.tapestrynewopera.com

"At every stage of our history Tapestry has been truly blessed with extraordinary artists. At Tapestry we are extremely fortunate to have so much to look forward to – never have we had such a burgeoning number of works in preparation for the stage. So as we celebrate our past, we are creating our future at the same time."

...Wayne Strongman

Company Evolution

Founded as an eight-voice ensemble in 1979, the Tapestry Singers toured extensively and presented an annual series of staged contemporary vaudevilles. With Leon Major as Resident Director, the young vocal ensemble premiered works by leading Canadian composers including R. Murray Schafer (*Felix's Girls*, *Princess of the Stars*); Howard Cable (*Disneyland*); Harry Freedman (*Three Songs and an Egg*) and David Passmore (*Toronto Island Suite*).

The performing company transformed into Tapestry Music Theatre in 1986, marking the end of the resident ensemble and reflecting a growing emphasis on new work development under the banner of The Great Canadian Music Theatre Project. Meanwhile, Tapestry maintained an active production stream with Alan Lund as Resident Director. Tapestry toured extensively with *Something's Rockin' in Denmark* (Cliff Jones) and the World War I



commemorative, *Legend of the Dumbells* (Opening of Wintergarden Theatre). In 1989 the company mounted a commercial production of the newly revised *Anne of Green Gables* (Elgin Theatre).

In 1992, Tapestry produced the world premiere *Nigredo Hotel* (Ann-Marie MacDonald & Nic Gotham) with Tarragon Theatre. Directed by Banuta Rubess, *Nigredo Hotel* became an award-winning signature work for Tapestry, with tours to festivals in the UK, BC and Ontario and remounted in Toronto as part of the World Stage series, and again in 2005 to celebrate the company's 25th anniversary. Between 1995 and 1999, with directors, Tom Diamond, Atom Egoyan and Billie Bridgman, Tapestry produced: the world premieres of *Still the Night* (Theresa Tova) with Theatre Passe Muraille in Toronto and with Alberta Theatre Projects for a national tour and *Elswhereless* (Atom Egoyan & Rodney Sharman) at World Stage with Vancouver New Music Society, the NAC and in Vancouver for the Opera America Conference; the Canadian premiere of *Passion* (Stephen Sondheim) with the Canadian Stage Company; and the Toronto premiere of *No No Miya* (Rudolph Komorous) for Today's Japan Festival at Harbourfront Centre.

In 1999, in its 20th anniversary season, acknowledging the art form that most consumed our creative artists and the innovative nature of the company, Tapestry evolved further to Tapestry new opera works. With directors Tom Diamond, Joanna McIntyre, Lynda Hill and Banuta Rubess, Tapestry premiered *Iron Road* (Mark Brownell & Chan Ka Nin); *Facing South* (Don Hannah & Linda Catlin Smith) for World Stage; *Sanctuary Song* (Marjorie Chan & Abigail Richardson) with Theatre Direct & Luminato, *The Shadow* (Alex Poch-Goldin & Omar Daniel) and almost 30 short works for *Opera to Go* beginning in 2002 for the Opera America Conference in Toronto. With directors Michael Clipperton and Emma Tibaldo, Tapestry has premiered two one act operas for children: *Elijah's Kite* (Camyar Chai & James Rolfe) developed with the Manhattan School of Music and *Get Stuffed* (Alexis Diamond & Richard Payne) developed with the Canadian Diabetes Association and Words in Motion.

Since 1995, Tapestry has been home to the annual Composer-Librettist Laboratory which is the creative hotbed at the heart of the company's creation-based mandate. Four composers and four writers are brought together for a 10 day period of collaborative discovery through the creation of 5 minute scenes which are written, composed and performed within a 48 hour cycle that is repeated four times, enabling each writer to work with each composer. Out of this seminal laboratory, 94 artists have graduated with 43 teams emerging to create new works for the stage, either for Tapestry or for other companies nationally and internationally. Since its inception, Tapestry's Composer-Librettist Laboratory has been internationally recognized as the leading program introducing new creators to the operatic form. Similar programs have been mounted in BC at Pacific Opera Victoria and in the United Kingdom. The LibLab is considered one of the world's leading programs for developing the form of new opera.

In 2003, the company moved to its first permanent home, with offices adjacent to the New Work Studio at the Distillery Historic District. The Ernest Balmer Studio was named for past Vice-President and lead individual donor. **The New Work Studio Company was introduced in 2007** as a resource to develop new work and to interpret the new vocabulary that is contemporary opera to Tapestry's audiences.

Over the past 30 years Tapestry has been nominated for 31 Dora Mavor Moore Awards, winning 9. **Collaboration is a keystone of the company's history with development and producing relationships with like minded companies** including Luminato, World Stage, Theatre Direct, Canadian Stage, The Gryphon Trio, Ex Machina, The Banff Centre, National Arts Centre, Tarragon Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Manhattan School of Music, American Opera Projects, New Music Concerts Toronto, Vancouver New Music Society, The Music Gallery and Bravo!FACT. Tapestry has consistently engaged emerging and established artists: Jean Stilwell, Theresa Tova, Patricia O'Callaghan, Judith Forst, John Fanning, Sally Dibblee, Keith Klassen, Carla Huhtanen, Theodore Baerg, Peter McGillivray, Scott Belluz, Louise Pitre, Gordon Pinsent, Barbara Hamilton, Tom McCamus and Mary Ann MacDonald, to name a few.

Accolades & Accomplishments



- Dora Mavor Moore awards for *Nigredo Hotel*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Iron Road*, *Still the Night* and *Sanctuary Song*
- *Nigredo Hotel* is the most-produced Canadian opera in history
- *Elijah's Kite* is the only Canadian opera to have two simultaneous productions
- 94 creative artists have graduated from the internationally recognized Composer-Librettist Laboratory and 43 teams have gone on to create new works for the stage
- Received the largest Canada Council Millennium funding award (250K) for *Iron Road*

Regent Park School of Music

Opened in May 1999, Regent Park School of Music is Toronto's foremost independent community music school. Our objective is to help inner-city young people learn music because the discipline of learning music helps instill discipline in everything these young people do. The results are better marks at school, good uses of spare time, and, importantly, new hopes and aspirations.

The music school has an open door, first come, first served policy. To ensure that the nominal lesson and instrument rental fees are affordable, a subsidy ranging from 80% to 97% is provided for each family in line with their needs. The students also have access to over 1200 lesson books, CDs, and music videos in the growing music school library. Students learn from dedicated teachers, who work for about 45% from their normal rates and teach over 150 students who come through the door every week.

Regent Park School of Music is a supportive setting where young people can build confidence, develop discipline, have positive mentoring experiences, develop sound life-skills, and also enjoy a music education based on excellence. The happy and fruitful years they spend here will teach them to explore appropriate lifestyles, setting them on the path to productive adult lives. Our graduates are a living proof of the significance of our program in this community.

The discipline of music education provides multiple benefits to young students. The music school has an open door, first come first serve policy. We work closely with our professional music faculty, who provide their services to us at discounted rates, to provide students with quality musical instruction at a cost that meets their very limited resources.

Currently approximately 275 young people from 146 families are registered at the music school taking lessons in cello, choir, early childhood music, flute, guitar, percussion, piano, saxophone, string ensemble, music theory, viola, violin and voice. We have a waiting list of over 250 children for our programs.

Regent Park School of Music is a supportive setting where young people can build confidence, develop discipline, and have positive mentoring experiences through music education based on excellence.

In March 2006, we began a pilot project in the Jane-Finch community teaching students steel drums at no cost. In March 2007, we expanded this program to include group piano and violin lessons at a nominal fee. Currently 100 students are registered for the program.

Since the school commenced operations, many students that have graduated have gone on to post-secondary studies. Truly, Regent Park School of Music offers children the opportunity to grow out of their surroundings and become contributors to society.

For more information about the School, please contact us at our office at 416-364-8900 or email us at regentparkschoolofmusic@on.aibn.com.



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