



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wayne Strongman appointed as Member of the Order of Canada

TORONTO, ON...Tapestry new opera works President and Board Chair Eric Adelman proudly announced that on December 30, 2009 Her Excellency The Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, appointed Wayne Strongman, Tapestry Managing Artistic Director, as a Member of the Order of Canada for his innovative contributions as the founding artistic director of Tapestry new opera works; as the long-time volunteer choral director for the Regent Park School of Music; and as a champion of Canadian composers.

"It has been a unique privilege to work with Wayne Strongman: first as a conductor, then as the Chairman of his Board, and most recently as a close friend. I am so very proud of his achievements. He is one of the hardest working musicians I know, whose performances reflect his incredible passion for both the work and those doing it. This honour is well deserved, and spreads the word that his contribution to the arts in Canada is already huge, with more to come." Eric Adelman, Tapestry President and Board Chair

"It is such an honour to be recognized by one's country, especially in the arts. Those of us who are called to such creative activity don't really do it for the praise! But for me it is especially warming to have the work of so many Canadian artists recognized: writers, composers, performers, designers, directors, stage directors and managers, administrators and an army of volunteers. They must all feel validated by this recognition that new Canadian operas are profoundly affecting our society, and this award is truly an affirmation of all our work." Wayne Strongman

The new appointees include 25 Officers (O.C.), and 32 Members (C.M.). These appointments were made on the recommendation of the Advisory Council for the Order of Canada. Mr. Strongman and his fellow appointees will be invited to accept their insignia at a ceremony to be held at a later date.

ORDER OF CANADA BACKGROUNDER

Established in 1967 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Order of Canada is the centrepiece of the Canadian Honours System, and recognizes a lifetime of outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation. The Order recognizes people in all sectors of Canadian society. Their contributions are varied, yet they have all enriched the lives of others and made a difference to this country.

The Order of Canada's motto is DESIDERANTES MELIOREM PATRIAM (They desire a better country). Her Majesty the Queen is the Sovereign of the Order, and the Governor General is the Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order.

- **Companion** – Post-nominal: C.C.
Recognizes: a lifetime of outstanding achievement and merit of the highest degree, especially in service to Canada or to humanity at large
- **Officer** – Post-nominal: O.C.
Recognizes: a lifetime of achievement and merit of a high degree, especially in service to Canada or to humanity at large
- **Member** – Post-nominal: C.M.
Recognizes: a lifetime of distinguished service in or to a particular community, group or field of activity
The Order of Canada, one of our country's highest civilian honours, was established in 1967, during Canada's centennial year, to recognize a lifetime of outstanding achievement, dedication to community and service to the nation. Over the last 40 years, more than 5000 people from all sectors of society have been invested into the Order.

For more information on the Canadian Honours System, please consult <http://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=5>.



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 works, now celebrating 30 seasons 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) 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 96 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).

In 2008, in addition to the 7 new short operas for *Opera to Go* as part of Harbourfront Centre's World Stage he conducted the premiere of *Sanctuary Song* (Chan/Richardson) for Toronto's Luminato Festival at Canadian Stage Berkley Street which won the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Opera/Musical. The following spring in the same venue, he conducted the nationally acclaimed world premiere of *The Shadow* (Poch-Goldin/Daniel). In 2010 he will premiere the third work Tapestry has commissioned from composer Andrew Staniland, (Professor of Composition at Memorial University, St. John's, Nfld.). *Dark Star Requiem* (to text by poet Jill Battson) will combine an all-star cast of 4 Tapestry alumnae, the Elmer Iseler Singers, the Gryphon Trio and percussionists Ryan Scott and Mark Duggan.

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 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.



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 Dumbbells* (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 *Elsewhereless* (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 Tivaldo, 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 in Toronto is foremost an 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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For further media information and interviews please contact Kim Blackwell at 416-346-4709, 416-686-0982 or blackwellcommunications@gmail.com