

OPERA
ATELIER | 08
09

presented by
Sun
Life Financial

Media Contact: Karen Lorenowicz
KL Strategic Communications
T: 416-243-0168 E: karen.l@sympatico.ca

Opera Atelier's 2008/09 season features works by Mozart and Monteverdi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Toronto, ON (February 20, 2008)... Today, Opera Atelier announced the details of its 2008/09 season featuring two operatic masterpieces by Monteverdi and Mozart.

The season begins in November with a new production of Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio* which tells of the adorable antics of the Spanish nobleman Belmonte and his servant Pedrillo as they plot to rescue their girlfriends from the harem of Pasha Selim. Commissioned by Austrian Emperor Joseph II, the opera was an instant success upon its 1782 premiere in Vienna. Opera Atelier's resident designer **Gerard Gauci** has created a spectacular new production which evokes the exoticism that enthralled 18th-century Europe at the time of the opera's premiere.

The Abduction from the Seraglio marks the company debut of Canadian tenor **Frédéric Antoun** as Belmonte, coloratura soprano **Amanda Pabyan** as his fiancée Konstanze, and Norwegian-American bass **Gustav Andreassen** as Osmin, overseer for the Pasha. The production also features soprano **Carla Huhtanen** in the role of Blonde, Konstanze's English maid, tenor **Lawrence Wiliford** as Pedrillo, bass-baritone **Curtis Sullivan** as Pasha Selim, and **Artists of Atelier Ballet**. **David Fallis** conducts the **Tafelmusik Orchestra**. *The Abduction from the Seraglio* runs **November 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 15, 2008** and will be sung in German with English SURTITLES™; the spoken text will be delivered in English.

The season continues in the spring of 2009 with the return of Opera Atelier's internationally acclaimed production of *The Coronation of Poppea*, Claudio Monteverdi's final masterpiece. This lavish spectacle of love, power and greed is based on the true story of Poppea, Nero's fiercely ambitious mistress, who aspires to be Empress of the Roman Empire and who will resort to any means – treachery, seduction, and murder – in order to realize her goal.

Canadian mezzo soprano **Kimberly Barber** makes her Opera Atelier debut in the role of Nero and soprano **Peggy Kriha Dye** returns to sing the role of Poppea. They are joined by **Olivier Laquerre** (Ottone), **Laura Pudwell** (Arnalta/Virtue), **João Fernandes** (Seneca), **Carla Huhtanen** (Drusilla), **Jennie Such** (Fortune/Venus), **Vicki St. Pierre** (Nurse), **Curtis Sullivan** (Liberto), **Artists of Atelier Ballet**, and **Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir** under the baton of conductor **David Fallis**. *The Coronation of Poppea* will be sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™ and runs **April 25, 26, 28, 29, May 1 and 2, 2009**.

Both productions in the 2008/09 season will be directed by **Marshall Pynkoski** and choreographed by **Jeannette Zingg**, Opera Atelier's co-artistic directors, with production designs by **Gerard Gauci**.

Performances for Opera Atelier's 2008/09 season will take place at the Elgin Theatre (189 Yonge Street) in Toronto with evening performances beginning at **7:30 p.m.**, and Sunday matinee performances beginning at **3:00 p.m.**

Subscriptions for Opera Atelier's 2008/09 season are on sale now and may be purchased by calling **416-703-3767 ext. 28**. For more information visit www.operaatelier.com

Opera Atelier also gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of The Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council, the Metcalf Foundation, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Creative Trust, and Jerry and Joan Lozinski.

2008/09 Season Sponsor: Sun Life Financial

2008/09 Major Sponsors: BMO Financial Group, Scotiabank, TD Canada Trust Music, Chieftain Insurance

-30-

Opera Atelier is Canada's premier baroque theatre company, 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. Over the past two decades, under the direction of founders Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Zingg, Opera Atelier has garnered acclaim for its performances at home as well as in the United States, Europe and Asia.