

# OPERA | 16 ATELIER | 17

**Media contact:**  
Bronwen Bradley  
bronwen.bradley@operaatelier.com  
416-703-3767 x224

## **Opera Atelier's 2016-2017 Season:** **Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Charpentier's *Medea* celebrating** **Canada's Sesquicentennial**

**- English/French program features operas focusing on powerful, complex women -**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Toronto, ON (January 26, 2016) – Opera Atelier's founding co-artistic directors Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg today announced the company's **2016-2017 season**, featuring Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Charpentier's *Medea*. Both operas are derived from ancient myth and feature a powerful, complex female protagonist. The season begins in October with ***Dido and Aeneas* (Oct. 20-29, 2016)**, featuring Wallis Giunta and Christopher Enns, and continues with ***Medea* (Apr. 22-29, 2017)**, featuring Peggy Kriha Dye and Colin Ainsworth. Following its Toronto run, *Medea* will tour to the Royal Opera House at the **Palace of Versailles** as part of Opera Atelier's engagement to perform there every two years.

***Dido and Aeneas*** (based on Virgil's epic poem *The Aeneid*) was composed by Henry Purcell with libretto by Nahum Tate at the end of the 1680s. It is the story of Dido, the widowed queen of Carthage, who embarks on a blatant affair with the mesmerizing Trojan prince Aeneas. When he abandons her, she bravely embraces her one alternative to a life of humiliation and regret.

***Dido and Aeneas*** will feature one of Canada's most important young mezzo-sopranos **Wallis Giunta** and tenor **Christopher Enns** making their role debuts as the title couple, and includes **Meghan Lindsay** (Belinda), **Laura Pudwell** (Sorceress), **Ellen McAteer**, **Karine White** and **Cory Knight**. In a nod to the 17th-century performances that took place at Josias Priest's girls school in Chelsea, London, the off-stage chorus for *Dido and Aeneas* will be made up of young singers from the **Toronto Children's Chorus**. *Dido and Aeneas* runs October 20 (media night), 22, 23 (3:00pm), 25, 28, and 29 (4:30pm). *Dido and Aeneas* is sung in English.

Opera Atelier's 16-17 season continues in April 2017 with Marc-Antoine Charpentier's ***Medea***. The libretto concerns the powerful princess Medea who forsakes her family and country to assist her lover Jason in his quest for the Golden Fleece. When he betrays her, she exacts a dizzying vengeance of which only a sorceress could be capable. Based on the ancient Greek myth popularized by Euripides' play of the same name, with a libretto by French dramatist Thomas Corneille, *Medea* premiered at the Théâtre du Palais-Royale in Paris in 1693. **The tour of *Medea* to Versailles (May 19, 20 and 21, 2017) is Opera Atelier's special project in honour of Canada's sesquicentennial.**

***Medea*** features the internationally acclaimed partnership of soprano **Peggy Kriha Dye** and Canadian tenor **Colin Ainsworth** singing the lead roles of Medea and Jason. They are joined by **Mireille Asselin** (Créuse), **Meghan Lindsay** (Nérine), **Jesse Blumberg** (Oronte), **Karine White** (Cléone), **Stephen Hegedus**, **Christopher Enns** and **Kevin Skelton**. *Medea* runs April 22 (media night), 23 (3:00pm), 25, 26, 28 and 29 (4:30pm). *Medea* is sung in French with English surtitles.

*Dido and Aeneas* and *Medea* will be directed by **Marshall Pynkoski** and choreographed by **Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg**, with set design by **Gerard Gauci** and lighting design by **Michelle Ramsay**. Both productions will feature the full corps of **Artists of Atelier Ballet**, and **Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra** under the baton of **David Fallis**.

Performances for Opera Atelier's 2016-2017 season will take place at the **Elgin Theatre** (189 Yonge Street) in Toronto. Subscriptions start at \$95 and are on sale now by calling **416-703-3767 x222**. Single tickets go on sale on August 8, 2016. For more information visit Opera Atelier's website: [www.operaatelier.com](http://www.operaatelier.com).

### **2016-2017 Major Sponsors**

Season Presenting Sponsor: BMO Financial Group

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Opera Atelier gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of The Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

*Opera Atelier is North America's premier period opera/ballet company, producing the opera, ballet and drama of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> 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. Led by founding artistic directors Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg since 1985, Opera Atelier has garnered acclaim for its performances at home as well as in the United States, Europe and Asia.*

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