

chicagooperatheater

Contact:

Colleen Flanigan
Director of Marketing and Public Relations
312.704.8420 ext. 225
cflanigan@chicagooperatheater.org

CHICAGO OPERA THEATER ANNOUNCES THEIR 2011 SPRING FESTIVAL SEASON

**Featuring the Midwest Premiere of Tod Machover's *Death and the Powers*,
The Chicago Premiere of Charpentier's *Medea*
And "HE/SHE" featuring
Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*
and Schumann's *A Woman's Love and Life***

CHICAGO, IL – On March 25, 2010, **General Director Brian Dickie announced Chicago Opera Theater's (COT) 2011 Spring Festival Season:** the Midwest Premiere of Tod Machover's ***Death and the Powers***, the Chicago Premiere of Marc-Antoine Charpentier's ***Medea*** (*Médée*), and "HE/SHE" featuring Leoš Janáček's ***The Diary of One Who Disappeared*** (*Zápisník zmizelého*) and Robert Schumann's ***A Woman's Love and Life*** (*Frauenliebe und Leben*).

Chicago Opera Theater's 2011 Spring Festival Season runs April 2 through May 13 at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance in Millennium Park.

Death and the Powers is a new opera by Tod Machover, premiering in Monaco the fall of this year. Developed at the **MIT Media Lab** in creative partnership with **Chicago Opera Theater** and Harvard's **American Repertory Theatre (A.R.T.)**, and with the support of **Futurum Association** (Monaco), this groundbreaking production will use specially designed technology including a chorus of robots, a Musical Chandelier, and a set that expressively "comes alive."

The libretto by former **U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky**, from a story by **Randy Weiner**, explores what we leave behind for the world and our loved ones, as told through an eccentric patriarch, Simon Powers (who "downloads" himself into The System), and his family and friends.

The music is by **Tod Machover**, whose genre-bending work is celebrated for its arching melodic lines, richly nuanced textures, and propulsive rhythms. He is also a pioneer in inventing new technologies for music, including Hyperinstruments which have been used by artists from Yo-Yo Ma to Prince, and for videogames *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band*, which grew out of his Lab. His most recent opera was the acclaimed *Skellig* - based on the famous children's novel by David Almond - which premiered at The Sage Gateshead (UK) in 2008. Mr. Machover is also the composer of the wonderful *Resurrection*, which premiered in 1999 at Houston Grand Opera.

"It is always enormously exciting to be involved in the creation of a brand new work," said COT General Director Brian Dickie. "And it is a huge joy for the company to be working with someone with the genius and charisma possessed by Tod Machover."

Diane Paulus returns to Chicago Opera Theater, after staging the hugely successful Broadway production of *Hair*, which won the **Tony Award® for Best Musical Revival**, and earned Ms. Paulus her first Tony nomination for Best Direction of a Musical. Conductor **Gil Rose** makes his Chicago Opera Theater debut. In 1996, he founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Death and the Powers will be designed by **Alex McDowell**, production designer of such films as Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Corpse Bride*, and Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report*.

For more on ***Death in the Powers*** go to:

<http://opera.media.mit.edu/projects/deathandthepowers/>

Next in Chicago Opera Theater's 2011 Spring Festival Season is the Chicago premiere of Marc-Antoine Charpentier's ***Medea* (Médée)**. This marks the second opera in COT's baroque "trilogy" that is devoted to the exploration of three operas with Medea as a central character. COT presents Cavalli's ***Jason (Giasone)*** next month, and will present ***Teseo*** by George Frideric Handel in 2012.

"Surprisingly no opera by Marc-Antoine Charpentier has ever been performed here in Chicago. We are happy to remedy that with *Medea*, a defining opera by a great French composer of the baroque period," said Brian Dickie.

Never has there been such a complicated figure as Medea, whose emotions run the gamut from passion to rage to vengeance. Watch her evil unfold during the telling of this love quadrangle between Medea, her husband Jason, Princess Cruesa, and Prince Oronte of Argos. Her fury reaches its climax in the final scene, where she commits the ultimate revenge against Jason, ensuring he will die a lonely and heartbroken man.

All three operas of the baroque "trilogy" will be conducted by **Christian Curnyn**, a rising star in the field of early music. In April of last year, he conducted performances of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at the English National Opera. Mr. Curnyn makes his New York City Opera debut on April 3 with Handel's *Partenope*.

Chicago's own **[Baroque Band](#)** will be the orchestra for ***Medea***. This period-instrument orchestra has been hailed by critics and audiences and has gained a reputation as one of the most exciting period-instrument ensembles in the United States.

Justin Way, who is directing **Jason**, returns to COT to direct **Medea**. His other work with COT was the critically triumphant **Orlando** in 2008 and the audience favorite **Abduction from the Seraglio** in 2006. Mr. Way just finished a run of *La bohème* at the Minnesota Opera and earlier this year directed *Carmen* at the Canadian Opera Company.

The final production of the 2011 Spring Festival Season is called "HE/SHE" and includes two dramatic song cycles about obsessive love: Leoš Janáček's **The Diary of One Who Disappeared** (*Zápisník zmizelého*) and Robert Schumann's **A Woman's Love and Life** (*Frauenliebe und Leben*).

The 2011 People's Opera winner, Shostakovich's **Moscow, Cheryomushki**, will be postponed to the fall of 2011, and will be a part of Chicago Opera Theater's 2011-12 Season, that will include one opera in the fall and two operas in the spring.

"COT, in common with so many performing arts companies, must adjust to some harsh economic realities. We are therefore postponing the production of Shostakovich's Moscow, Cheryomushki to September of 2011. It will be replaced in the spring of 2011 with a fascinating double header," said General Director Brian Dickie. **"I believe that it will be most intriguing for music lovers to see these two masterpieces of the song repertoire fully staged. The evening promises to be a passionate night at the theatre."**

The Diary of the One Who Disappeared will star [Joseph Kaiser](#), last seen to rave reviews in Chicago Opera Theater's **Béatrice et Bénédict**. *The New York Times* observed of his Met debut in *Roméo et Juliette* that, "Mr. Kaiser has an ardent, youthful and warm tenor voice. His performance was enriched by his keen musical intelligence and elegantly stylish phrasing. Tall, handsome and agile, he has an appealing stage presence." This summer he will be singing Admete in Gluck's *Alceste* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival.

The production will be directed by **Lillian Groag**, returning to Chicago Opera Theater after acclaimed productions of **Dido and Aeneas** (2006), **La Resurrezione** (2005), and **Agrippina** (2003). *The Chicago Tribune* said of **Dido and Aeneas**, "Lillian Groag is back at Chicago Opera Theater, once more proving that old opera can, in the right hands, deliver a bracing shock of the new."

The pianist for both pieces is the distinguished accompanist **Craig Terry**. He has performed with such esteemed vocalists as Sir Thomas Allen, Christine Brewer, Eric Cutler, Joyce DiDonato, and Patricia Racette.

Designer **Peter Harrison** returns to COT after his triumphant work on **Owen Wingrave** in 2008. He also designed COT's **Death in Venice** in 2005.

Chicago Opera Theater performs at The Harris Theater for Music and Dance in Millennium Park - 205 East Randolph Drive.

Season Subscriptions for the 2011 Spring Festival Season, which include a ticket to all 3 operas, range from \$90-\$310 for new Subscribers and \$70-\$295 for current 2010 Subscribers who renew by October 1, 2010. COT also offers a 50% discounted student rate in most sections.

Subscription available now by phone at **312.704.8414**. They will be available online at ChicagoOperaTheater.org starting in mid-April.

2011 Spring Festival Season

Tod Machover

DEATH AND THE POWERS

April 2, 6, 8 at 7:30pm; April 10 at 3pm

Conductor: Gil Rose
Director: Diane Paulus
Designer: Alex McDowell

Marc-Antoine Charpentier

MEDEA (Médée)

April 23, 27, 29 at 7:30pm; May 1 at 3pm

Conductor: Christian Curnyn
Director: Justin Way

Sung in French with English supertitles.

HE/SHE

May 7, 11, 13 at 7:30pm; May 8 at 3pm

Leoš Janáček's

The Diary of One Who Disappeared (Zápisník zmizelého).

Sung in Czech with English supertitles.

Robert Schumann's

A Woman's Love and Life (Frauenliebe und Leben)

Sung in German with English supertitles.

Piano: Craig Terry
Director: Lillian Groag
Designer: Peter Harrison

Death and the Powers is a creative partnership with MIT Media Lab and the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) with generous support provided by the Monaco-based Futurum Association.