

ESSENTIAL OPERA PRESENTS
A WORKSHOP PERFORMANCE OF

IN HER HANDS

THE TRAGEDY OF LADY MACBETH

BY FIONA M. RYAN
DIRECTED BY EMILY JEWER



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 7:30PM
MOTYER-FANCY THEATRE, SACKVILLE, NB
TICKETS \$25/\$20/PWYC
ONLINE & AT THE DOOR
ESSENTIALOPERA.COM

FEATURING

THERA BARCLAY • ERIN BARDUA • MAUREEN BATT • DANIELLE BUONAIUTO
JOEL CORMIER • KIRSTY MONEY • WINONA MYLES • ELIZABETH STEPKOWSKI TARHAN



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IN HER HANDS

THE TRAGEDY OF LADY MACBETH

by Fiona M. Ryan
Directed by Emily Jewer

Sunday, September 22, 7:30PM
Motyer-Fancy, Purdy Crawford Centre for the Arts
Sackville, NB

CAST

Weird Sister 1 - Thera Barclay, soprano

Weird Sister 2 - Winona Myles, soprano

Weird Sister 3 - Elizabeth Stepkowski Tarhan, mezzo*

Lady Macbeth - Erin Bardua, soprano*

Duncan - Danielle Buonaiuto, soprano*

Hecate - Maureen Batt, soprano

Violin/Nyckelharpa - Kirsty Money

Percussion - Joël Cormier

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

Composer - F.M. Ryan

Librettist - F.M. Ryan based on W. Shakespeare

Stage Director - Emily Jewer*

Lighting Designer - Kylie Vienneau

Stage Manager - Liana Baxter

Producers - Essential Opera



*The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance Opera Theatre Policy (DOT).

MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTORS



Essential Opera is one of a very small number of East Coast opera organizations commissioning, presenting, and championing recently commissioned works by living composers, especially those from typically excluded groups. We have always believed new compositions are inherently “essential”. Bringing a full opera to fruition is an involved process.

From 2020-2022 Fiona began researching and composing scenes. In 2022, parts of this score were workshopped here at Mount Allison and at Dalhousie University, by groups combining student and professional singers and instrumentalists. Members of the public couldn’t attend those workshops, but you’re here tonight to witness the next phase of development. This week, we’ve been immersed in daily rehearsals, experimenting with new sounds and new ways of interpreting music and text. Our awesome cast and instrumental ensemble has been adventurous and vulnerable. We’re performing with a small amount of stage movement to give a sense of what might be possible in a full production. As is typical in a workshop of a work in development, everyone will be using their scores, since our rehearsal period has been short and intense, and the work has been undergoing changes right up until today.

We want to personally thank Fiona for partnering with us on this incredible endeavour. We are so proud to be making this opera with you!

This week we received the absolutely extraordinary news that Essential Opera has received a composite grant from Canada Council meaning that we have confirmed funding for the final production of this opera!

Thank you, the audience, for joining us tonight!

~Maureen and Erin

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



Thera Barclay is in demand as an interpreter of operatic, recital, and concert repertoire, and has graced stages across Canada, Europe, and the United States. Recent performance highlights include Flora (The Turn of the Screw), Esmeralda (Prodaná nevěsta), Marie (La fille du régiment), Marzelline (Fidelio), Zerlina (Don Giovanni), Mabel (The Pirates of Penzance), and Barbarina (The Marriage of Figaro). She holds an Artist Diploma from The Glenn Gould School, a Master of Music in Opera from The University of British Columbia, and an Honours Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from Wilfrid Laurier University. Ms. Barclay has a vested interest in curly hair products, craft, and neighbourhood cats.

Winona Myles is a multi-disciplinary artist from the Simpcw First Nation. She discovered her love for the performing arts as a little girl watching Judy Garland in “The Wizard of Oz.” She grew up performing with various production companies, and she recently completed her musical theatre education at the Canadian College of Performing Arts, where she had the privilege of playing Anne Shirley in “Anne of Green Gables” for the college’s 25th anniversary season. Other recent credits include “On Native Land” (Urban Ink Productions/Raven Theatre) and “The Incredible Adventures of Mary Jane Mosquito” (Project X Theatre). One of her proudest accomplishments to date is playing the role of Girl Angel in the Canadian premiere of “Angel’s Bone” by Du Yun. She is thrilled to have been invited to participate in this workshop, and can’t wait to start off the Fall season with the most iconic witchy story of all time!



Elizabeth Stepkowski Tarhan is a Canadian Opera and Theatre Artist living in Calgary/Mohkinsts. She is a singer, stage director, award winning actor, and educator. Elizabeth has appeared on stages across much of Canada as well as in the US, Mexico and Scotland. She has directed for Calgary Opera, The Shakespeare Company, The Guild Hall, Seadreamer, Urban Stories/Drama on a Dime, Storybook Theatre and Stage West, as well as new work at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. She has several works in development. ‘Clotho; Camille Claudel’ an Opera based on the life of sculptor Claudel. A new adaptation of Garcia Lorca’s ‘The House of Bernarda Alba’ that combines the poetic text with Flamenco inspired song and movement, and a Children’s Opera with circus. Most recently, Elizabeth taught workshops in voice and performance at the Sibiu International Theatre Festival, attended Oxenfoord International Summer Music School under the Artistic Directorship of Malcom Martineau, and assisted Peter Hinton-Davis on Das Rheingold at Edmonton Opera. Elizabeth is thrilled to be joining the team to explore this wonderful new opera.

Erin Bardua, soprano, is a vocalist, stage director, and instructor/clinician. She enjoys a range of artistic encompasses new compositions, early music, and the work of historically overlooked creators, in a range of styles from Western classical to commercial. She is featured on Essential Opera's award-winning EP "Etiquette" in the role of Emily Post and in EO's opera films "December" and "Mirror Mirror".

Erin has performed with the Early Music Society of the Islands, Salt Spring Baroque, Victoria Baroque, Talisker Players, Nota Bene Baroque, Pax Christi Chorale, Capella Intima, London Pro Musica, Vancouver Opera, and Pacific Opera Victoria, among others. She has provided dramatic coaching, stage direction, and voice instruction for COSA, Victoria Baroque Intensive, Halifax Summer Opera Festival, and productions at Mount Allison University.



Canadian-born, Brooklyn-based soprano **Danielle Buonaiuto** has been praised for "terrific clarity and color" (Baltimore Sun), "entrancing and fluid" singing (DC Metro Theatre Arts), and "ethereal vocals" that reveal "exquisite vocal technique and luscious colors" (OperaWire). Danielle maintains an active schedule as a soloist and consort musician throughout the US and Canada, focusing on working with living composers. Danielle's first appearance with Essential Opera was as Natasha in December (Pearce). She made her COC debut creating the role of Cass/Cassia in Pomegranate (Marshall/Hale) and debuted with Tapestry Opera creating [Helena] in RUR: A Torrent of Light (Lizée/Billon). Her album, Marfa Songs, featuring Canadian and American contemporary art song, was released with Starkland in 2020. Danielle is a founding member of Chamber Queer and of Duo Calisto with spouse Jules Biber, cellist. She is a member of the extra chorus at Met Opera and a doctoral student at CUNY, in musicology/queer studies.

Maureen Batt is a soprano, recording artist, artistic director, and educator. Celebrated for her "rich, warm sound and masterful acting" (Opera Canada), she has created 13 Canadian opera roles. Maureen's career focuses on celebrating music by living composers through her opera company Essential Opera, her concert series Crossing Borders, and her discography which includes two-time ECMA-winning *Lighthouse* (with Grej); JUNO-nominated *Breathing in the Shadows*; *Durme, Durme: Four Ladino Folk Songs*; *Aunt Helen*; *Mirror, Mirror*; *Lady of the Lake*; and *Etiquette*. She is regularly on faculty at HSOV and is a frequent adjudicator and guest clinician. Maureen specializes in embodied voice, voice & movement play, and gender affirming voice work. She has an MMus from UofT, a BMus from Dalhousie, and a BA from STU. She serves on the Canadian Music Centre board and is Atlantic chair.





Joël Cormier first studied at the Université de Moncton where he finished his BA. Mus in music performance. Afterwards, he studied percussion at the University of Toronto where he finished his Masters in Music Performance and his Doctorate in Musical Arts.

Joël is an experienced orchestral percussionist having played with many orchestras throughout Canada. He also collaborates on many new music projects and especially enjoys experimental music.

Joël released his first solo percussion CD, “Les voiles blanches” in 2012. The album features two well known New Brunswick composers: Richard Gibson and Christian Hébert.

Along with teaching percussion at Mount Allison, Joël is also timpanist for Symphony New Brunswick.

Joël Cormier a débuté ses études à l'Université de Moncton où il a terminé son Baccalauréat en musique. Ensuite, il a poursuivi ses études à l'Université de Toronto où il a obtenu sa maîtrise et son doctorat en musique.

Joël est un joueur orchestral expérimenté. Il a joué avec plusieurs orchestres au Canada. Il collabore aussi avec de nombreux projets de musique contemporain et il aime surtout la musique expérimentale.

Joël a lancé son premier CD de percussion solo “Les voiles blanches” en 2012. L'album comprend les pièces de Richard Gibson et Christian Hébert.

Joël enseigne actuellement les percussions à Mount Allison. En plus, il est le timbalier pour Symphonie Nouveau-Brunswick.

Kirsty Money is a dynamic performer and teacher of modern/baroque violin and the nyckelharpa. Originally from BC, she studied violin at the Victoria Conservatory of Music, and has performance degrees from McGill and Western Universities, as well as her Licentiate from the Royal Schools of Music in the UK. Kirsty has been a member of the first violin section of Symphony Nova Scotia since 1999.

She was introduced to the baroque violin through playing in L'Orchestre Baroque de Montréal. Kirsty has appeared as a soloist in the SNS Baroque series, as well as with the Boxwood and Sackville Early Music Festivals. Currently, she is a guest teacher/coach at the Halifax Institute of Traditional and Early Music.

Living with the Folk Traditions in NS inspired Kirsty to take up the Swedish Nyckelharpa, an instrument dating from Medieval Northern Europe. In 2021, Kirsty won the inaugural Award for Professional Development from Women for Music for excellence in music performance in Nova Scotia.



Fiona Ryan is a composer and musician who lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Kjipuktuk), where she composes, teaches, directs a choir, writes, and performs. Fiona's musical works incorporate theatrical elements and improvisation. "In Her Hands" incorporates many of Fiona's compositional research interests, including exploring collaborative work in non-hierarchical ways, and questioning how gender, sexuality, and culture interact with music composition.



Fiona's music was featured on two recordings released in 2017, one of which, *Lady of the Lake*, was nominated for classical composition of the year at the 2018 East Coast Music Awards. In 2011, Fiona received a SOCAN Foundation Young Composers Sir Ernest MacMillan Award (composition for large ensemble, third prize). Fiona holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in composition from the University of Toronto, a Master of Music from Newcastle University, and a Bachelor of Music from Dalhousie University.

Fiona's music is inspired by her eclectic musical experiences including choral music, improvisation, opera, chamber music, rock bands, musicals, and traditional/folk music.



Emily Jewer (she/they) is a multidisciplinary artist working in theatre, film, and the visual arts. Emily graduated from Mount Allison with a BFA and spent a year training with Neptune Theatre's Pre-Professional Training Program in acting. Since then they have worked as an actor in theatre and film and as an emerging theatre director.

Emily was part of the inaugural Chrysalis Project at Neptune in the directing stream, assisting on productions such as *Shakespeare in Love*, *KAMP*, and *Hamlet*. The program culminated in a showcase production and Emily presented Brecht's *The Jewish Wife* with a modern day slant contrasting the experiences of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community with pre-WWII Germany. Over the last couple years, Emily has begun to explore opera directing, assisting on the world premier of Sandy Moore's opera *Escape to Freedom*, co-directing *Ordo Virtutum*, and directing workshops for three new short operas currently in progress. She has delivered master classes in acting for opera singers for the last three years at Vocalypse's summer program *Opera from Scratch*.

Emily looks forward to finding interesting and challenging work to direct in both opera and theatre, with a focus on accessibility and intersectionality for audiences and performers.

SPECIAL THANKS

Our most heartfelt thanks to the following people and organizations for their help in making this experimental workshop possible:

The entire team at the Motyer-Fancy Theatre Department
Ian McFarlane, Valmai Goggin, and Sarah Fanning

Our front of house volunteers

Our spouses Richard Belding and Vicki St. Pierre

The donors and artists from our February Musical Greeting
Fundraiser

The students and instrumentalists who workshopped
scenes with us in fall 2022

Skylar Cameron

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