

For immediate release: July 17, 2020

## **CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY TO STREAM *HADRIAN* IN FREE, ONE-NIGHT-ONLY PRESENTATION, FEATURING LIVE Q&A**

### **The *Hadrian* Watch Party is part of Montréal Pride Festival’s digital lineup**

**Toronto** – For the first time ever, audiences around the world will have a special opportunity to watch the **Canadian Opera Company’s** 2018 world premiere production of *Hadrian*, in full, online. On **Monday, August 10 at 6:30 p.m. ET**, in partnership with **Montréal Pride Festival**, the COC is hosting a free, one-night-only digital stream of the modern grand opera. The ***Hadrian* Watch Party** helps kick off one week of virtual Pride events and will feature a live Q&A session with both the composer and celebrated singer-songwriter **Rufus Wainwright** and librettist **Daniel MacIvor**, a giant in Canadian theatre.

“This is the first time that *Hadrian* is being shared in its entirety online and the first time that the COC is presenting one of our operas using high-quality digital footage,” says **COC General Director Alexander Neef**. “It feels particularly fitting for a production that was also the first COC-commissioned opera to debut on our stage at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts.”

“Beyond Rufus’ natural connection to Montreal, the city where he grew up, having *Hadrian* featured as part of Montréal Pride Festival this year is especially meaningful,” adds **Neef**. “In bringing this opera to our stage, we wanted the world to know Hadrian and Antinous’ story. By sharing it once more through this digital collaboration, we hope that it will reach a global audience, helping to reclaim this long-forgotten piece of history.”

The ground-breaking production puts an overdue spotlight on one of history’s greatest romances between Hadrian, ruler of the Roman Empire, and his beloved Antinous. The opera’s all-star cast is headlined by American baritone **Thomas Hampson** as Hadrian, Canadian tenor **Isaiah Bell** as Antinous, Finnish soprano **Karita Mattila** as Plotina, and Canadian soprano **Ambur Braid** as Sabina. Director **Peter Hinton** is joined by an accomplished Canadian creative team; striking sets, paired with dramatic lighting and rich costume design, create an ethereal experience, fully transporting a 21st-century audience into this ancient, and important, story.

With its blend of history, political intrigue, and fantastical invention, woven into a heartbreaking love story, *Hadrian* gives one of history’s greatest queer romances the full, grand opera treatment. The evening’s streamed performance will feature cinematic, multi-camera footage, bringing audiences closer than ever to the production’s blockbuster soloists, the renowned **COC Orchestra**, led by **COC Music Director Johannes Debus**, and the **COC Chorus**, led by **Price Family Chorus Master Sandra Horst**.

This digital event is free but requires advance registration at [coc.ca/Hadrian](http://coc.ca/Hadrian).

Throughout the performance, audience members can tweet questions for the live Q&A to follow, using the hashtag **#HadrianWatchParty**.

*Hadrian* is sung in English and Latin and will be streamed by the COC with English subtitles.

## **Critical Praise for *Hadrian***

“A gay love story that speaks to our time.”

- **The New York Times**

“It was a truly grand spectacle, with stunning visuals from the set, costumes, video projections, and positioning of cast, chorus and five male dancers.”

- **Toronto Star**

“The orchestra bubbles with eclectic sounds and stunning, pared-down moments of chamber music. The score makes nods to Satie, Debussy, Puccini and Mahler... There’s a fun sextet that feels like a modern version of the sexy *Carmen* quintet.”

- **The Globe and Mail**

## **What Our Audiences Shared**

“Saw the @CanadianOpera and @rufuswainwright’s incredible *Hadrian* today, a wonderful ode to passionate and ancient LGBT love (with such exquisite design). 10/10 do recommend.”

- **Sasky Stewart (@Sasky)**

“*Hadrian* deserves to be widely heard. In dark and challenging times, light and beauty in music makes a difference. Unafraid to wear his love for the genre on his sleeve this a composer worth hearing.”

- **Gill Graham (@gg43)**

“Yesss to @CanadianOpera for commissioning #*Hadrian*. Stunning opening night performances! Bravi tutti!”

- **Colleen Renihan (@musiccolleen)**

“Fantastic music Rufus Wainwright, fantastic libretto Daniel MacIvor, the singing + acting!!! An important and deeply moving opera.”

- **John Ralston Saul (@JohnRalstonSaul)**

## **CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM**

<b>Hadrian</b>	Thomas Hampson
<b>Plotina</b>	Karita Mattila
<b>Trajan</b>	Roger Honeywell
<b>Turbo</b>	David Leigh
<b>Sabina</b>	Ambur Braid
<b>Antinous</b>	Isaiah Bell
<b>Hermogenes</b>	Gregory Dahl
<b>Lavia</b>	Anna-Sophie Neher
<b>Fabius</b>	John Mac Master
<b>Nervous Senator</b>	Thomas Glenn
<b>Sycophantic Senator</b>	Samuel Chan
<b>Superior Senator</b>	Joel Allison
<b>Dinarchus</b>	Ben Heppner
<b>Angelic Boy/Herald</b>	Madelaine Ringo-Stauble*+ and Josh Fralick*
<b>Conductor</b>	Johannes Debus
<b>Director</b>	Peter Hinton
<b>Set Designer</b>	Michael Gianfrancesco
<b>Costume Designer</b>	Gillian Gallow

**Lighting Designer**  
**Projection Designer**  
**Choreographer**  
**Dramaturg**  
**Price Family Chorus Master**

Bonnie Beecher  
Laurie Shawn-Borzovoy  
Denise Clarke  
Cori Ellison  
Sandra Horst

**Dancers**

Rodney Diverlus  
Robert Halley  
Gavin Law  
Jack Rennie  
Brett Andrew Taylor

\*Members of the Canadian Children's Opera Company  
+This performance features Madelaine Ringo-Stauble

### **ABOUT THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY**

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience including a dedicated base of subscribers. Under its leadership team of General Director Alexander Neef and Music Director Johannes Debus, the company has an international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation. Its diverse repertoire includes new commissions and productions, local and international collaborations with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracts the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The COC Academy is an incubator for the future of the art form, nurturing Canada's new wave of opera creators with customized training and support. The COC performs in its own opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. For more information, visit [coc.ca](http://coc.ca).

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Avril Sequeira, Director of Public Relations, tel: 416-306-2387, email: [avrils@coc.ca](mailto:avrils@coc.ca)

Kristin McKinnon, Publicist and Content Producer, tel: 416-306-2383, email: [kmckinnon@coc.ca](mailto:kmckinnon@coc.ca)