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MEDEA TO SET THE STAGE ABLAZE IN FIRST-EVER APPEARANCE AT THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

Toronto—When Luigi Cherubini’s *Medea* opens at the **Canadian Opera Company** this May, Toronto audiences will have the opportunity to witness a globally acclaimed cast take on one of opera’s most rarely performed works in a thrillingly evocative production from multi-award-winning director **Sir David McVicar**. Never before performed on the COC stage, the opera stars some of the world’s most sought-after artists, including **Sondra Radvanovsky**, **Matthew Polenzani**, and **Janai Brugger**, in a blistering vengeance tale that sees a scorned sorceress return to viciously destroy all who have wronged her. *Medea* runs for six performances on **May 3, 5, 9, 11, 15, and 17, 2024** at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts**.

A DARK, DRAMATIC, AND RICHLY TEXTURED OPERA EXPERIENCE

Renowned Scottish director **Sir David McVicar** is known for his dramatic visual signature. Critics and audiences alike applauded his last two productions at the COC, a “must-see” (*Opera Canada*) *Rusalka* and the Dora Award-winning staging of Verdi’s *Macbeth*. With *Medea*, **McVicar**, alongside Associate Director **Jonathon Loy**, brings the tragic Greek myth into the early 20th century, allowing for sumptuous sets of green and burnished gold; in an especially striking feature, the production has incorporated a massive tilted mirror that both amplifies and distorts the audience’s perception of events on stage. Costumes from **Doey Lüthi** are richly detailed—elaborately styled wigs, a wedding dress with a stunning train, and a black feathered gown for Medea that elicits the ominous figure of a raven. Finally, lighting, from original designer **Paule Constable** and revival designer **Clare O’Donoghue**, combined with spectacular projections originally designed by **S. Katy Tucker** and revived by **Blake Manns**, dial up the drama as the unrelenting revenge thriller careens toward its fiery finale.

AN ALL-STAR CAST FOR A NOTORIOUSLY CHALLENGING WORK

Cherubini’s *Medea* is revered as one of the most difficult works in the operatic canon. For the title singer in particular, the story demands she remain on stage for almost the entire opera, making it a role that is musically and dramatically complex as well as a test of physical endurance. Star soprano and perennial COC favourite **Sondra Radvanovsky** returns to share one of the most daunting roles in opera with Italian soprano **Chiara Isotton**. After **Radvanovsky** debuted as Medea in this production at the Metropolitan Opera in the fall of 2022, *Bachtrack* raved that her portrayal “cements [her] position as thrilling *prima donna assoluta*.” This is a **Canadian Opera Company** debut for **Isotton**, who recently also made a “fiery Met debut” (*Parterre Box*) as the title character in Giordano’s *Fedora*.

Matthew Polenzani, hailed by acclaimed Music Director of the Metropolitan Opera Yannick Nézet-Séguin as “the greatest tenor of our time,” returns to Toronto following a star turn as Alfredo in the COC’s 2022 production of *La Traviata*. **Polenzani** reprises the role of Giasone, leader of the Argonauts and Medea’s former lover, opposite **Janai Brugger** who brings her “opulent soprano voice” (*Los Angeles Times*) to her reprisal of the role of Giasone’s new bride Glauce, in a COC debut. Two more artists make their Toronto debut in this *Medea* with bass-baritone **Alfred Walker** bringing his “sonorous” (*Bachtrack*) voice to the role of King Creonte, and mezzo-soprano **Zoie Reams**, hailed by *Opera News* for her “velvety” vocals, singing Neris, Medea’s loyal maid. **Ensemble Studio** graduate **Alex Halliday** sings the role of Captain of the Guard, with **Ensemble Studio** soprano **Charlotte Siegel** and **Ensemble Studio** mezzo-soprano **Alex Hetherington** completing the cast as Glauce’s handmaids.

Italian conductor **Lorenzo Passerini** makes a COC debut at the podium leading the **COC Orchestra**, and **Price Family Chorus Master Sandra Horst** leads the **COC Chorus**.

Medea is sung in Italian and presented by the COC with English SURTITLES™.

Medea is a co-production of **Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Canadian Opera Company**, and **Greek National Opera**.

CAST

Medea	Sondra Radvanovsky Chiara Isotton (May 15, 17)
Giasone	Matthew Polenzani
Creonte	Alfred Walker
Glauce	Janai Brugger
Neris	Zoie Reams
Captain of the Guard	Alex Halliday
Handmaid of Glauce (1)	Charlotte Siegel
Handmaid of Glauce (2)	Alex Hetherington

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Lorenzo Passerini
Assistant Conductor	Derek Bate
Director	Sir David McVicar
Associate Director	Jonathon Loy
Assistant Stage Director	Mario Pacheco
Set Designer	Sir David McVicar
Costume Designer	Doey Lüthi
Original Lighting Designer	Paule Constable
Revival Lighting Designer	Clare O'Donoghue
Projection Designer	S. Katy Tucker
Associate Projection Designer	Blake Manns
Movement Director	Jo Meredith
Fight and Intimacy Coordinator	Siobhan Richardson
Price Family Chorus Master	Sandra Horst
Stage Manager	Stephanie Marrs
Assistant Stage Manager	Mike Barrs
Assistant Stage Manager	Al Gadowsky

With the **COC Orchestra** and **COC Chorus**

TICKET INFORMATION

Medea runs for six performances on **May 3, 5, 9, 11, 15, and 17, 2024**, at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts**.

Single tickets for *Medea* range from **\$35 – \$250 for adults**, with Grand Ring seats available at **\$290** and **\$350**, and **\$22 tickets available for guests between the ages of 16 and 29** through the COC's **Opera Under 30** program.

Tickets can be purchased online at coc.ca or by calling the Four Seasons Centre Box Office at **416-363-8231**. For more information on booking **student groups, standing room, and rush tickets**, as well as other specially priced tickets available to **young people under the age of 15**, please visit coc.ca.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Medea is generously underwritten in part by **The Whiteside Foundation**.

Sondra Radvanovsky is generously sponsored by **The Tauba and Solomon Spiro Family Foundation** and **The Whiteside Foundation**.

Sandra Horst and the **COC Chorus** are generously underwritten by **Tim & Frances Price**.

The **COC Orchestra** is generously sponsored, in part, by **W. Bruce C. Bailey**, in honour of Christie Darville, COC Deputy General Director, and Johannes Debus, COC Music Director, and, in part, by **The Schulich Foundation**.

Thank you to the entire COC community, including our [COC Board of Directors](#), our [Corporate Sponsors and Foundation Supporters](#), [generous public funders](#), [union partners](#), and — most critically — [our audience](#). Your inspiring support ensures that opera flourishes, uniting global audiences and paving the way for a vibrant future.

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. General Director Perryn Leech joined the company in 2021, forming a leadership team with Music Director Johannes Debus and Deputy General Director Christie Darville. The COC enjoys a loyal audience, including a dedicated base of subscribers, and 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 company is an incubator for the future of the art form, nurturing Canada's new wave of opera performers and creators with customized training and support. The COC's purpose-built opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, is hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. For more information, visit coc.ca.

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