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FIVE NEW PRODUCTIONS AND A COC FAVOURITE HEADLINE 2024/2025 SEASON

Lineup includes the first-ever COC staging of Verdi's *Nabucco* and Toronto premiere of *La Reine-garçon*

Toronto – The **Canadian Opera Company** announced its 2024/2025 season today with exciting programming comprised almost entirely of new-to-Toronto productions including the first-ever COC staging of Verdi's *Nabucco*, the world premiere of a new production of Gounod's *Faust*, and the Toronto premiere of *La Reine-garçon*, a new creation from Canadians Julien Bilodeau and Michel Marc Bouchard. Other featured operas include Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Berg's *Wozzeck* and Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, as well as a one-night-only concert presentation of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*.

"I am delighted to share our 2024/2025 season," says **COC General Director Perryn Leech**. "With the COC's international reputation, I wanted to create a lineup that would be new and exciting for seasoned opera-goers while providing globally beloved classics and boundary-pushing presentations for newer audiences to explore. I'm also delighted to be partnering with opera companies here at home and around the globe in the creation of important new productions. The COC boasts exceptional technicians and artisans who are putting a distinctly Canadian stamp on opera productions that will be seen all over the world."

"With the addition of *Cavalleria rusticana*, we're excited to add a mainstage concert as another way to experience opera in 2024/2025," continues **Leech**. "I am thrilled this season at the Canadian Opera Company will showcase some of the world's most incredible vocal artists, extraordinary musicians, and wonderful technicians in an unparalleled venue: the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. It's a season that has something for everyone."

For detailed information on cast and creative teams, please [download our Season Reference Sheet here](#) or visit coc.ca/2425.

COC's 2024/2025 SEASON AT-A-GLANCE

***Nabucco* by Giuseppe Verdi**

October 4, 6, 12, 17, 19, 23, and 25, 2024

Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™

A production from Lyric Opera of Chicago

The **Canadian Opera Company** launches its 2024/2025 season with a sweeping saga that has never been performed at the COC in the company's 74-year history. An incredible work of raw power and epic storytelling, *Nabucco* calls for a cast of more than 120 performers and hundreds of costumes, creating a feast for the eyes as well as the ears. Baritone **Roland Wood** stars as the tyrannical title character with soprano **Tamara Wilson**, a COC favourite, returning to Toronto as Abigaille, his supposed daughter and would-be Queen of Babylon. **Ensemble Studio** graduates, mezzo-soprano **Rihab Chaieb** and tenor **Matthew Cairns**, take on the roles of lovers Fenena and Ismaele, with conductor **Paolo Carignani** leading the **COC Orchestra** through some of the most rousing and passionate music ever written, including the iconic "Va, pensiero" chorus.

Faust by Charles Gounod

October 11, 13, 16, 18, 24, 26; November 2, 2024

Sung in French with English SURTITLES™

A new COC production

In this classic tale of a “deal with the devil,” the aging philosopher Faust trades his soul for eternal youth—to disastrous consequences. Charles Gounod’s operatic take is a quintessential example of French grand opera that’s making a comeback on the world’s stages and is the first new COC mainstage production entirely catalyzed by **COC General Director Perryn Leech**. Acclaimed tenor **Long Long** stars as the scholar Faust opposite bass-baritone **Kyle Ketelsen** as the demon Méphistophélès with soprano **Kseniia Proshina** making a COC debut as Faust’s love interest, Marguerite. Murder and madness ensue, with demons, witches, and a chorus of celestial voices rounding out this lavish spectacle directed by **Amy Lane**, who recently helmed the COC’s boundary-pushing productions of *Don Giovanni* (2024) and *Gianni Schicchi* (2021).

Madama Butterfly by Giacomo Puccini

January 24, 26; February 1, 6, 8, 12, 14, and 16, 2025

Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™

A production from Houston Grand Opera

A musical masterpiece of love, longing, and tragedy returns to the COC stage in a new-to-Toronto production from Tony Award-winning director **Michael Grandage**. *Madama Butterfly* is one of Puccini’s most compelling and thought-provoking works, famous for both its opulent music and complicated political legacy. **Eri Nakamura** stars as Butterfly (Cio-Cio San), the faithful young Japanese woman awaiting the return of her American naval officer husband Pinkerton; Pinkerton will be portrayed by tenor **Kang Wang**, last seen in the COC’s 2023 hit staging of *La Bohème*. **Keri-Lynn Wilson** leads the **COC Orchestra** through one of the composer’s greatest scores, unmatched for its beauty and dramatic intensity.

La Reine-garçon by Julien Bilodeau and Michel Marc Bouchard

January 31; February 2, 5, 7, 9, 13, and 15, 2025

Sung in French with English SURTITLES™

A co-commission and co-production between the Canadian Opera Company and the Opéra de Montréal

Raised as a boy by her father and faced with the collective expectations of the society she ruled, Queen Christine of Sweden boldly chose to explore and pursue her own desires and intellectual curiosity, leaving an indelible mark on the pages of history. In this first-ever co-commission between the **Canadian Opera Company** and the **Opéra de Montréal**, *La Reine-garçon* unites two of Canada’s most innovative creatives: composer **Julien Bilodeau** and playwright **Michel Marc Bouchard**. The opera features a powerhouse cast of Canadian singers, including sopranos **Kirsten MacKinnon** and **Kirsten LeBlanc** as the Queen of Sweden; tenor **Owen McCausland** as René Descartes, who is summoned to guide the young Queen; and bass-baritone **Philippe Sly** as Christine’s suitor Count Karl.

Wozzeck by Alban Berg

April 25, 27; May 3, 8, 10, 14, and 16, 2025

Sung in German with English SURTITLES™

A co-production from the Canadian Opera Company, Salzburg Festival, Metropolitan Opera, and Opera Australia

Alban Berg’s *Wozzeck* is a landmark of 20th-century music. Shaped by the composer’s personal experiences during World War I, the opera eerily captures the disorienting, dehumanizing experience of war through the stark tale of a soldier’s slow descent into madness. South African artist **William Kentridge** directs, using a rich array of painting, archival footage, film montage, and puppetry to immerse audiences in *Wozzeck*’s inner turmoil. Fresh from their starring roles in COC’s *Salome* (2023), baritone **Michael Kupfer-Radecky** takes on the title role, alongside soprano **Ambur Braid**, who stars as Marie, his lover, and tenor **Michael Schade** as the Captain. **Ensemble Studio**

graduate and tenor **Matthew Cairns** also returns to the COC as the Drum Major pursuing Marie—a final insult that sends *Wozzeck* veering towards murder and self-destruction.

Eugene Onegin by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

May 2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 17, and 24, 2025

Sung in Russian with English SURTITLES™

A Canadian Opera Company revival

Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* is one of opera's most romantic masterpieces, an aching meditation on happiness undone. Soprano **Lauren Fagan** stars as the bookish Tatyana whose brief joy with Eugene Onegin, sung by baritone **Vasily Ladyuk** in a COC debut, is swiftly dashed by the worldly young man's lust for a life untethered. The simple story is elevated to "a piece of contemporary operatic history" (*The Globe and Mail*) through a beautifully restrained staging from Canadian director **Robert Carsen** that's earned rave reviews all around the world. Conducting virtuoso **Speranza Scappucci** returns to the COC podium to lead the opera's sweep of emotional melodies across the lifespan of a doomed relationship. **Price Family Chorus Master Sandra Horst** leads the Dora Award-winning **COC Chorus** through the opera's rousing choral numbers.

For detailed information on cast and creative teams, please [download our Season Reference Sheet here](#) or visit coc.ca/2425. All repertoire, dates, productions, and casting are subject to change without notice.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND CONCERTS

Centre Stage: Ensemble Studio Competition

October 30, 2024

One of the most exciting and impactful evenings of the year, **Centre Stage: Ensemble Studio Competition** showcases the new generation of brilliant young singers as they compete for cash prizes and the chance to be invited to the **COC Ensemble Studio**, Canada's leading career development program for emerging opera artists. Finalists are selected through rigorous cross-country auditions and then spend a week in Toronto being coached and mentored in the lead-up to the live audience competition. For most singers, this night represents their biggest artistic accomplishment in their careers to date—and a potentially life-changing experience. All proceeds from the unforgettable showcase go to the **Ensemble Studio**, making it a great chance to support emerging Canadian talent.

Cavalleria rusticana by Pietro Mascagni

May 23, 2025

One of the world's most successful one-act operas comes to the COC stage in a one-night only concert presentation. The gripping thriller about love, jealousy, and betrayal unfolds in near real-time as audiences witness a simmering love triangle reach its boiling point. The cast of internationally renowned artists features tenor **Russell Thomas** as Turiddu, soprano **Anna Pirozzi** as Santuzza, mezzo-soprano **Deborah Nansteel** as Mamma Lucia, and baritone **Simone Piazzola** as Alfio. **COC Music Director Johannes Debus** describes the story as "a larger-than-life adultery drama... full of high-octane passion"; he leads the **COC Orchestra** through the propulsive score, including the opera's famous Intermezzo.

TICKET INFORMATION AND SPECIAL PRICING

Subscriptions to the 24/25 season are available now and may be purchased online at coc.ca, or by calling **416-363-8231**. Subscribe by **April 30, 2024** to guarantee your renewable seats.

Single tickets to all 24/25 operas will be available to the general public on **Monday, July 22, 2024**. Subscribers, donors, and newsletter subscribers will be contacted directly with details on exclusive pre-sale access.

Opera Under 30 offers \$22 tickets to patrons under the age of 30.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Season Sponsor: BMO Financial Group

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

Wozzeck is a co-production with The Salzburg Festival, The Metropolitan Opera and Opera Australia.

Wozzeck is generously underwritten, in part, by **Phil Lind**.

Eugene Onegin premiered by the Metropolitan Opera in New York City on March 13, 1997. All scenery, properties and costumes constructed by the Metropolitan Opera Shops.

Eugene Onegin is generously underwritten, in part, by **David Spiro**.

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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