

THE BANFF CENTRE PRESENTS

Frobisher



Composer: John Estacio Librettist: John Murrell

Wednesday, August 8, 2007 7:30 p.m.

Friday, August 10, 2007 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, August 12, 2007 2:00 p.m.

Eric Harvie Theatre

Sung in English and Inuktitut with English surtitles

Act One 20 minute Intermission Act Two

Co-commissioned and co-produced by The Banff Centre and Calgary Opera







(I-r) Frobisher's "two Johns" — librettist John Murrell and composer John Estacio. Portrait of Martin Frobisher by Cornelis Ketel.

Frobisher - The Creation of a New Opera By John Estacio & John Murrell

Co-commissioned and co-produced by The Banff Centre and Calgary Opera

Co-Producer and Banff Centre President and CEO Mary Hofstetter, on The Banff Centre's journey from Filumena to Frobisher

Four years ago, the success of *Filumena* proved that there is a place for Alberta stories on the opera stage. When librettist John Murrell and composer John Estacio approached The Banff Centre and Calgary Opera with a proposal for a second opera, we leapt at the opportunity to partner once again in bringing an important new Canadian work to life.

The creation of new works, like *Frobisher*, is at the heart of what we do at The Banff Centre. Over the past two and a half years, seven intensive workshops were held in Banff, allowing the opera's creative team to work collectively to refine the story, music, and production elements of *Frobisher*. Further refinement and development has happened during the past few months, subsequent to the Calgary production, in preparation for these performances in Banff.

Throughout the development process, emerging theatre professionals and some of Canada's leading young singers have worked alongside top theatre and musical artists, exchanging ideas and acquiring handson skills in a creative learning environment unlike any other. Dozens of young artists and theatre artisans have experienced transformative professional development by contributing to the rehearsal, dramaturgy, and the construction of sets and costumes for *Frobisher*.

None of this work would be possible without the support of our donors. The Banff Centre would especially like to acknowledge and thank Jackie Flanagan, whose support and vision were essential to the creation of both *Filumena* and *Frobisher*.

We are delighted to have partnered once again with our colleagues at Calgary Opera on the co-commission and co-production of this work, and to share this new Alberta story with the world.





(I-r) Video production shoot of Frobisher character, featuring actor David McNally, David Bedard and Hélène Couture at a December 2005 Frobisher workshop.

Co-Producer and Calgary Opera General Director Bob McPhee on Calgary Opera's journey from *Filumena* to *Frobisher*

The staff and board of Calgary Opera have been looking forward to *Frobisher* ever since the world premiere of *Filumena* four years ago. The journey of working with such a strong creative team and our wonderful colleagues at The Banff Centre to bring something truly special onstage was something we knew we wanted to do again. Thankfully, the same creative team that made *Filumena* such an overwhelming success was already developing a concept for their next project, before *Filumena* even had its world premiere, and were more than willing to join together again to bring another new Canadian opera to life.

It has been an absolute joy to work with some of Canada's most accomplished artists through seven workshops, countless creative meetings, and through the set and costume build as the story was nurtured, the production design began to develop, and the sets and costumes were built. All the work and effort put into the project by composer John Estacio, librettist John Murrell, director Kelly Robinson, scenic designer Sue LePage, lighting designer Harry Frehner, musical dramaturge John Hess, and countless others, is seeing its payoff now in Banff.

The journey over the past four years to bring *Frobisher* to the Calgary Opera and The Banff Centre has been deeply rewarding, as we watched the opera grow from a concept, to a work-in-progress, to a truly remarkable grand opera that we are proud to share with the world.

Supporter Jackie Flanagan on Frobisher

We sometimes think of culture as Beethoven's symphonies, Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, or even *Cats* — something that comes from somewhere else. It's meaningful to me that artists of this place have created an opera out of the materials of our own history, our own experience, and our own imagination.

Jackie Flanagan is leading the way for the many supporters of Frobisher who have helped to make this production possible.

John Estacio on the workshop process and his second world premiere opera

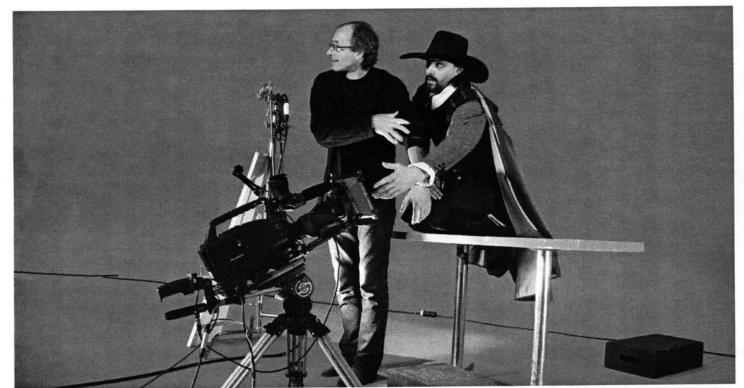
The workshops in Banff over the past several years gave us a chance to try things out, before we committed to them. It's the closest we can get to trying it out on an audience. On Broadway, a production will go out of town, being performed in other locations, tried out in front of paying audiences, and tweaked based on audience reaction, before being brought back to New York. We don't have that same opportunity in opera, but these workshops were the closest thing.

We had four workshops for the music alone. I wrote multiple versions of Wagman's brief aria, for example, and the chance to actually hear it sung allowed me to see how it was working. In particular, we were dealing not just with that one aria, but with how it fits in the pacing of the entire production — if it's dragging, if it's too long or not long enough. The workshops helped with all of that.

Our last official workshop was in August 2006, here in Banff. We had a chance to semi-stage the production, making many more changes to words and music. Then I went immediately into scoring the piece for the orchestra, which is a character in the opera as well. The piano score, used in the workshops, was the blueprint, but if the piano could be considered 2D, then the orchestra takes us to 3D. I had to think symphonically. It's something I was keeping in mind, while writing the music for the piano — but when writing for an orchestra, it's a much more detailed sound. On a piano, you've got ten fingers. In an orchestra, you've got ten fingers times about 60 people.

In addition to the official workshops, before the Calgary premiere, the creative team has had several months of reflection and refinement, prior to this Banff premiere – plus the several weeks of rehearsal here in Banff – to make further changes, additions, and deletions to the text, music, and physical production of *Frobisher*. This is, again, a necessary luxury, in creating an opera which we hope will live for years to come.

Having run this kind of marathon once before (with *Filumena*) means that I have had a sense of where the peaks and valleys are along the journey; though knowing about them doesn't necessarily make them easier! You still need to run, and this journey isn't the same. *Frobisher* is a different beast from *Filumena*; we've worked even harder. It's got a richer music to it. When I wrote my program notes for *Filumena*, I made mention of how many notes in total there were in the music. There's a lot more in *Frobisher!*



Video production shoot for Frobisher in the Centre's Rice Studio: Stage director Kelly Robinson experiments with Frobisher's hand movements

John Murrell on the making of Frobisher

For me the greatest joy, in working on *Frobisher*, has been the inspiration and wisdom of my exceptional colleagues: John Estacio, one of the most gifted and humane of contemporary composers; Kelly Robinson, a stage director who never stops seeing and sharing deeply; Sue LePage and Harry Frehner, designers with whom I've collaborated for many years now, but who constantly surprise me with their wit and insight; John Hess, a musical dramaturge with a wealth of experience and exceptional bravery in tackling brand-new operas; the Bonniols, our genius projection designers, and on and on; the actors, singers and other musicians, friends and extended family, all of whom played critical roles in helping me to survive and, I hope, succeed at, the unlikely task of creating an opera libretto which is both poetry and theatre. In preparation for these performances in Banff, the family has been extended by several remarkable new members — including our genially dynamic guest conductor for *Frobisher* in Banff, Alexander Platt.

Although I have attempted, many times over the past thirty-odd years, to write an opera libretto (sometimes for my own edification, sometimes for commissions which never came to fruition), *Filumena* was the first time I really got out of the starting gate. I had so much to learn — about how few words there must be, in order to leave room for the music; about how the music can tell parts of the story which words can never approximate; about the fact that stage movement, designs, and singers' performances must be integrated into the warp and woof of the piece, as early as possible — because opera is the ultimate collaborative art form. Opera demands extraordinary daring, on the part of all its creators. It is unbelievably complex and contradictory, like all meaningful human communication. And opera demands extraordinary humility, at the same time, because no one individual's ideas give it life. Opera is a child with many parents, each of whom plays an irreplaceable part in its conception. In being one of *Frobisher's* many parents, I have achieved, more than anything, a supreme respect for its other parents.

I must add that, for any child, to have committed and generous godparents like The Banff Centre and Calgary Opera is a special grace and an indispensable blessing.

Kelly Robinson on his role in the development of the opera

Directing a new opera is quite a different experience from directing a piece from the standard repertoire, where you are following in the footsteps and dealing with the expectations of previous productions.

With a world premiere like *Frobisher* you have a chance to fit the design elements, stage effects and actions, hand-in-glove with the story and its characters. The design is organic, rather than a gloss over an older story. It becomes integral to the understanding of the piece.

Having worked with John Estacio, John Murrell, Sue LePage, and Harry Frehner before (with *Filumena*), there is an ease and comfort as collaborators. A shorthand has been developed, to get to different issues more quickly this time around, along with a trust and confidence in each other. We enjoy working with each other as creators. I'm also very comfortable with the workshop process. We do it often in theatre, where new work is more common than in opera.

Frobisher is also unique in being almost entirely fictional. There was much more of a historical record in *Filumena*. We had some knowledge of who that person was, and what she did within a certain time-frame; meaning, we knew which way our story had to go. In *Frobisher*, there are many more elements to be shaped, and there isn't a pre-set plot to build from. This was both freeing and constricting, in that we had more room to potentially trip up. The work can go in any direction, to better show the themes of the piece, but we had to find those directions ourselves.

My own expertise comes in finding proper directions of expression. There are many ways to express emotion — in Anna's case, many ways one can choose to grieve. The appropriate expressions need to be chosen, with a view to painting a convincing portrait of the character — one which is in line with the visions of the creators. I mediate between the text and the singer.





(I-r) Costume sketch of Queen Elizabeth costume, courtesy Sue LePage. John Fanning and Elizabeth Turnbull in *Frobisher*, photo by Trudie Lee.

Sue LePage on designing Frobisher

Designing something like *Frobisher* is ongoing: it isn't over until the curtain goes up on each opening night. It continues to develop, from conception to building, and even in rehearsals. Following the premiere in Calgary, the whole creative team has gone back to work on the text, music, direction, and physical production of *Frobisher*. We've hadtime, during rehearsals in Banff, to rethink, add to, and delete from our previous thoughts.

Frobisher seems to have such different times and places in its story, such diverse ingredients, that you could compare it to cooking. In Frobisher's case, it is a particularly long list of ingredients! It started with a process of experimentation, and you're always playing with and rethinking the recipe as you're in the kitchen.

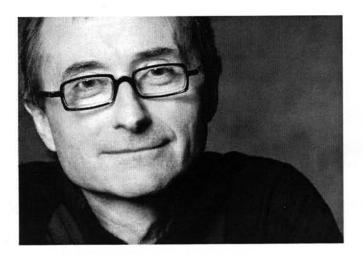
At first, the multiple periods and locations seemed like a challenge. What's been most valuable was a certain discovery: the fact that so many of the time periods, the scenes and locations, are actually being seen through one character's or another's eyes. Quite a few of them are seen through Anna's eyes, often as a dream or through her imagination. So, in that sense, the opera is playful with the reality of the period, and the demands of representing the historical accuracy become less hard-edged.

Likewise, the imagery proved useful, especially in the parallels between the various journeys. Frobisher himself is exploring the unknown, Anna is creating a new film; while, in another frame-of-mind, Estacio and Murrell are creating a new opera. All this has elements of exploration which can be played with and combined. Even the audience participates in this exploration, at the very least because the story takes them farther north than most people ever go. In this sense, there is an inherent cohesiveness to the whole work; you know you are in the world of the story, and that it is all somehow connected.

Difficult journeys, explorations into the unknown, and the Arctic landscape itself, have great spiritual and mythical qualities. The nature of ice implies danger, instability, along with beauty, in this shifting landscape.

Designing something from scratch is entirely different than working on an established opera. Older works allow creativity in the interpretation of a familiar narrative and theme; but, in this case, everything is new, nothing has a precedent. The opera becomes an organic creature, and it keeps changing in character, developing into something ever more complex, until it's ready to be born onstage

Message from the Program Director



A warm welcome to the 2007 Opera As Theatre Program's production of John Estacio's and John Murrell's *Frobisher*, the second performance of this work following its premiere at Calgary Opera last January, a co-commission of both The Banff Centre and Calgary Opera.

The Opera As Theatre Program is unique in the training opportunities it provides young singers in Canada. Each year, our faculty seeks out the most gifted and promising young artists emerging in the profession, from conservatories, graduate programs in vocal studies, and in the ateliers of Canada's leading voice teachers. Now in its sixth year, the program brings together young singers from across the country with internationally recognized teachers and practitioners for an intensive and rigorous artistic process. Classes in acting, improvisation, text, scene study, period movement, dance, coupled with master classes in vocal technique and performance, are integrated into an exploration of the full range of the artist in opera performance, with a particular emphasis on theatrical authenticity.

Frobisher, the second work from the team of Murrell and Estacio, has been an exceptional training vehicle for our young artists. Fine-tuning of the opera's libretto and score during the rehearsal period have brought the singers into immediate contact with the opera's creators, a rare opportunity in an art form that relies heavily on the standard repertoire. The opera's themes of love, passion, and dreams that go beyond what life seems to offer connect with our own young singers' ambitions.

It has been a privilege for myself, Maestro Alexander Platt, our gifted team of teachers, coaches, repetiteurs, and assistants, to work with this wonderful group of young artists over the past six weeks. We hope you enjoy our journey into the mysterious world of Martin Frobisher, as dreamed by the young filmmakers, Michael and Anna.

Kelly Robinson Program Director Opera As Theatre Program

Donors

The Banff Centre is grateful to the following donors for their generous support of Frobisher.

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Composer

John Murrell

Librettist

Mary Hofstetter

Co-Producer/ President & CEO, The Banff Centre

W.R. (Bob) McPhee

Co-Producer/General Director & CEO, Calgary Opera

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Appearing courtesy of:

† Canadian Actors' Equity Association

* Work-Study Participant in the Theatre Production, Design, and Stage Management Program

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Robin Wheeler

Repetiteur/Coach

Jenna Douglas

Repetiteur/Coach

Assistant Repetiteur/Coach

David Wadley

Orchestra Manager

Mhiran Danson-Faraday

Program Co-ordinator

Cast of Characters

Anna

Frobisher

Michael

Jessica

Queen Elizabeth

Wagman

Trevor

Mark

Kate

Wagmanite

Wagmanite

Wagmanite

Film Person

Film Person

Film Person

Anna understudy

Christina Tannous§

Benjamin Covey

Thomas Macleay§

Heather Jewson

Leslie Davis

Andrew Lovet

Christopher Mayell

Keith O'Brien

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Catharin Carew

Lara Ciekiewicz

Chorus

Sopranos

Neema Bickersteth† Andrea Cerswell Lara Ciekiewicz Bethany Hörst Arianna Sovernigo

Mezzo-sopranos

Natalie Burdeny Wallis Giunta Melissa Plagemann

Tenors

Robert Clark Patrick Jang **Eric Neaves** Alexander Wolniak

Baritones

Mark Gough Keith Lam Sam Marcaccini Philippe Sly Trevor Van Den Bussche

Supernumeraries

Neil Dallhoff Stephane Prevost Lars McPhee Erich Mende

Appearing courtesy of:

- † Canadian Actors' Equity Association
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John Freivogel

Erin James

Rebecca Lin

Alisa van Dijk

Roseminna Watson

Kenny Wong

VIOLIN II

Jung-Eun Ahn

Lyne Allard

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Natalia Brzewska

Adriana Lebedovich

Matthais McIntire

Sae Niwa

VIOLA

Jacob Adams

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ENGLISH HORN

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CLARINET

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BASS CLARINET

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Samantha Brenner

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FRENCH HORN

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The 2007 Banff Summer Arst Festival Orchestra is supported through a collaboration between the Theatre Arts Department and the Music & Sound Department.

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Synopsis

Historical Background

In 1576, 1577, and 1578, Martin Frobisher, a sea captain and sometimes pirate, made three perilous journeys to the Canadian Arctic, funded by Queen Elizabeth I among others, and allegedly searching for the fabled Northwest Passage to Asia. None of his voyages resulted in either major discoveries or significant profit. Toward the end of his life, he was principal commander of Her Majesty's fleet in the battle with the Spanish Armada.

THE OPERA Act One, Scene One

The time is the present. ANNA and MICHAEL, a young married couple from Alberta who write, direct, and produce films together, are somewhere near Baffin Island, scouting locations for their next film, which will be about MARTIN FROBISHER. MICHAEL believes that FROBISHER was secretly searching for a tropical Earthly Paradise, which, in his day, was rumoured to exist "at the top of the world," beyond the Arctic ice. This secret search is the story of their film. But ANNA is nervous about the idea for the movie, and about MICHAEL's singleminded obsession with FROBISHER.

A storm overtakes them, and, in spite of ANNA's protests, MICHAEL goes off to continue his scouting. She is left alone. Suddenly, magically, the storm clouds are blown away, and the dazzling Northern Lights reach down menacingly toward ANNA. Ancient Inuit voices, from within the aurora borealis, cry out the word "Beyond!" in the Inuktitut language. A gigantic spectre—MARTIN FROBISHER —appears within the Lights, and commands ANNA to tell the true story of his quest for a second Garden of Eden, a wondrous place where mankind could make a new start.

Act One, Scene Two

ANNA awakes from the dream, or nightmare, which was Scene One. She has fallen asleep under the flickering Northern Lights, on the deck of the cabin where she and MICHAEL lived and worked, in the woods of northern Alberta. ANNA's mother JESSICA comes out of the cabin, and ANNA tells her about the dream she had of MICHAEL and FROBISHER. That day in the Arctic, months ago, was the last time ANNA ever saw MICHAEL alive; he walked into the storm and no further sign of him has ever been found. Now ANNA is faced with the challenge of making MICHAEL's film about FROBISHER, all by herself—or failing to honour her late husband's "last dream". JESSICA, a teacher and producer of film, tells ANNA that she must get on with her work and her life—but ANNA feels lost, unbearably alone.

JESSICA goes inside, and ANNA remembers the first time she met MICHAEL, when they were film students together. We see their meeting in "flashback". When MICHAEL vanishes yet again, ANNA calls out to him for help, for comfort, across time and space. She picks up their unfinished script for the film about FROBISHER, opens it, and reads a scene which comes to life in her imagination...

Act One, Scene Three

(A scene from the film script, as ANNA reads and imagines it)

In spring 1578, MARTIN FROBISHER tries to persuade QUEEN ELIZABETH I to provide him with ships and money for a third trip to the polar regions. THE QUEEN complains that she paid for his two previous voyages and has received nothing of value in return. Once he is able to get rid of her troublesome COURTIERS, FROBISHER shares with ELIZABETH his ardent vision of an Earthly Paradise, which explorers, from the earliest times, have insisted exists in the vicinity of the North Pole. THE QUEEN is intrigued by FROBISHER's mania, but not yet convinced. This scene begins to melt back into ANNA's imagination, as she closes the script from which it comes...

Act One, Scene Four

On the deck of her cabin, ANNA is certain that she will never be able to complete the FROBISHER script, much less make it into a film, without MICHAEL there to guide and assist her. She remembers a day, less than a year ago, when the two of them fought, right here on the deck of their cabin, about whether to tell FROBISHER's story on film...

And MICHAEL is suddenly there again, very life-like, in her memory. He tries, yet again, to convince her that a movie about FROBISHER's quest for a new-found Paradise can touch people's hearts, especially in our own confusing and unhappy time. When ANNA argues the point, MICHAEL begins to slip away from her, back into memory...

But then FROBISHER himself steps out of the forest, to confront and exhort ANNA. He tells ANNA that she will find MICHAEL "beyond the storm," if she continues the work which they had begun—if she tells FROBISHER's story as MICHAEL envisioned it.

FROBISHER vanishes too, and ANNA tells MICHAEL—wherever he is—that she will make the film, in his memory, and then they will always be together.

Act One, Scene Five

A few days later, ANNA has written a tentative ending to the FROBISHER script, and has invited a few close FRIENDS to the cabin, to "try out" what she has written. In the midst of this improvisation, ANNA suddenly hears FROBISHER's commanding voice and catches a glimpse of him, radiant within the woods. She must somehow make the movie—but who will give her the resources to accomplish this?

Act One, Scene Six

At an ultra-chic Film Festival in the Rockies, ANNA and JESSICA try to sell the Frobisher film idea to STEPHEN WAGMAN, a wealthy American producer. But, because there's no workable ending for the movie yet, and because WAGMAN lacks faith that ANNA can succeed without MICHAEL's help, he turns her down.

ANNA is ready to give up—until a memory of MICHAEL suddenly emerges, out of the Film Festival crowd, and summons up a vision of FROBISHER, to demonstrate to ANNA how hard one must work to sell a dream. FROBISHER and QUEEN ELIZABETH are conjured up—for ANNA's eyes only—and the pirate finally manages to convince his monarch that it is worth any price, if there is a chance that England's flag might fly above the New Paradise.

Inspired by FROBISHER's persuasion of ELIZABETH, ANNA goes back to WAGMAN, and, using FROBISHER's tactics and some of his powerful words, she manages to convince the producer to underwrite the costs of her film. ANNA conjures up for WAGMAN a moment from the movie she and MICHAEL planned: FROBISHER is about to set forth on his third voyage, in spite of the fears of his CREW, and in spite of ELIZABETH's warnings that he dare not disappoint her again. Even WAGMAN can almost see the film happening in front of him...as ANNA can...and so can we...

JESSICA, WAGMAN, and FILM FESTIVAL FOLK are in a dither about the enormous challenges which lie ahead for ANNA. QUEEN ELIZABETH I, her COURTIERS, and FROBISHER'S CREW are both enraptured and appalled by the challenges which lie ahead for FROBISHER. ANNA and FROBISHER are supremely confident: the only dream worth pursuing is one far beyond what we know—perhaps beyond what we can ever know!

Act Two, Scene One

On the storm-savaged coast of a tiny island in the Canadian Arctic, MARTIN FROBISHER is assailed by his CREW and by a bevy of ELIZABETH'S COURTIERS, whom she has sent along to protect her interests. They insist on setting sail for home immediately. The ice is closing in, the time of Arctic storms is here; they will all die unless they abandon the quest. But FROBISHER is determined to move onward, northward, toward the dream of Paradise.

CREW and COURTIERS attempt to take FROBISHER prisoner, to force him to depart. FROBISHER breaks free and, taking one of the frail rowboats, disappears among gigantic icebergs. He will see his journey through to the end, even if it means a cold and lonely death.

A voice yells "Cut!"—and we realize that we have been watching the final scene of the movie, as ANNA and her CREW have been filming it. This is the ending which ANNA has settled on: FROBISHER's dream drives him beyond reason, towards an unknowable North (just as MICHAEL's dream drove him). ANNA is assailed by a bevy of WAGMAN'S CRONIES, whom he has sent along to protect his interests. Even JESSICA, who is acting as onsite producer, feels that this ending will never work, either for WAGMAN or for audiences. But ANNA's mind is made up: this is the only possible ending for MICHAEL's (and FROBISHER's) quest.

Eventually, ANNA is left alone. She realizes that she will never be allowed to complete the movie to her own satisfaction, so she makes up her mind to live out the beautiful mad dream in real life—as MICHAEL and FROBISHER did. She climbs into the same frail rowboat which the actor playing FROBISHER took, and sets forth through the ice and the approaching storm, to see her journey through.

JESSICA comes back to the set, to fetch ANNA, and discovers that her daughter has ventured off into the Arctic alone. The storm breaks with phenomenal fury.

Act Two, Scene Two

Beyond the storm, ANNA's boat comes to a halt. She is no longer alone. FROBISHER is with her, acting as her guide into a world beyond what is real or reasonable. He points out ANNA's path, onward. He tells her to close her eyes, so that she can see the way to MICHAEL.

ANNA steps out of the boat, closes her eyes, and moves bravely forward, as ancient Inuit voices chant challenge and encouragement.

Beyond the Northern Lights, ANNA finds MICHAEL waiting for her. They embrace ecstatically—but MICHAEL immediately urges ANNA to return to life, which is not a place he can ever go again. He insists that she still has work to do, more life to live, more films to make, more dreams to share—and he is forever beyond all those things. ANNA begs to stay with him, even though it is only in death that they can be reunited. As he begins to move away, into an endless Northern darkness, she begs MICHAEL to stay with her—but he leaves her alone—to make her choice between life and death.

ANNA lies down on the ice, beyond the Northern lights, and closes her eyes...

Act Two, Scene Three

STEPHEN WAGMAN talks to the media about the film he is now making, from the fragments ANNA left behind.

Act Two, Scene Four

ANNA'S MOTHER and FRIENDS gather to discuss what happened to her and to her film.

Program Notes by John Murrell

On the story of Frobisher

Essentially, Frobisher is about people who dream "beyond the bonds of life," as the libretto says. It is about all of us, really, because all of us have dreams which extend beyond our everyday lives, our everyday wants and needs. In this opera, Anna and Michael are two young Alberta filmmakers, who dream of creating movies which will send strong messages to the world, messages which they feel the world needs to hear. Michael plans to make a film about Martin Frobisher, the sixteenth century pirate and explorer, who made three voyages to the Canadian Arctic in the 1570s. Supposedly Frobisher was searching for the fabled Northwest Passage and for precious minerals in the far North; but Michael has dreamed a different version of Frobisher's dream. He believes that Frobisher was searching for a tropical Earthly Paradise, a second Garden of Eden which, in his time, was believed to exist "at the top of the world," in the vicinity of the magnetic Pole. Anna, Michael's wife as well as his artistic partner, feels that this is a very risky movie for them to make, and is terrified of Michael's obsession with this myth of Frobisher.

When Michael disappears into an Arctic storm while the two of them are scouting film locations near Baffin Island, Anna is faced with a great dilemma: Should she make the Frobisher film on her own, and thus honour her beloved Michael's final dream? Should she find other, less frightening material to work on? Should she stop making movies, now that her partner in dreams is gone forever?

The story is told in a series of "parallel scenes," some of which are set in Frobisher's era, and some of which take place in our own time. Frobisher's search for a new start for humankind runs parallel to Anna's search for a means of beginning life again without Michael.

On the inspiration behind the story of *Frobisher*

I had been reading books about Arctic exploration and the compulsion which explorers feel to venture into the vast icebound unknown. I was particularly fascinated by Frobisher's journeys to what is now Nunavut, in "a few little ships like splinters of wood", as the libretto says. What could have made anyone face the dangers, the hardships, the disease and the loneliness of such journeys? It seemed to me that only a supreme need to "find that which can never be found" would drive such a dreamer. When John Estacio and I discussed the idea, he suggested that we anchor Frobisher's strange quest by providing a contemporary counterpart, a story of today's creative dreamers, who must constantly push the envelope of imagination and beauty and meaning.

On the challenges of setting *Frobisher* in two separate time periods

John Estacio and I have been challenged to find a poetry and a "poetry in music" which can work in both time periods, so that the parallels between Anna's story and Frobisher's story are clear. When Anna approaches Stephen Wagman, an American film producer, for funding to complete Michael's cinematic dream, their conversation must sound believably contemporary, edgy and up-to-date, both verbally and musically. When Frobisher, in a parallel moment, approaches Queen Elizabeth I for money to back his third voyage to the unknown North, their conversation must provide interesting similarities to Anna's and Wagman's, and yet both words and music must convince us that it is occurring in the sixteenth century, amidst the shallow pomp and poisonous corruption of the Tudor court. Then, in the final scene of Act One, these two different and yet parallel worlds must collide and merge with one another, so that we have a sense of how much the guest for irrational hope and optimism has been the same in all times, in all places. Somehow words and music must be simultaneously modern and ancient, just as our central human challenges tend to be.

On the difference between writing for opera and writing a play

Writing words to be spoken and writing words to be sung are not such different tasks. In both cases, the writer must believe that what he or she is trying to communicate is truthful and important – must feel, in fact, that it is absolutely essential that other human beings receive this "message." Like all other useful human activity, writing is about perceiving and communicating. It is a serious and daunting business. In both spoken theatre and opera, we writers are blessed to have gifted fellow travelers, creators and performers who add immeasurably to our individual store of thought and emotion. But, in opera, we also have the unique blessing of music, of a composer who does much more than literally make our words sing. A fine composer, like John Estacio, makes our words connect more meaningfully, and suggest deeper significance, than even the greatest poetry or prose could ever do. Working on both Filumena and Frobisher, Estacio and I discovered and explored that marvelous territory where our sensibilities and beliefs about the human condition – its potential and its limitations – come together in a perfect harmony of intention and compulsion. This has been a special delight for me, after so many years of struggling to make words alone bear the freight of my "letter to the world."

On blending historical figures into a fictional story

Paradoxically, all works of art are ultimately fictional, and all good works of art are essentially true-to-life. Filumena was based on the story of a young immigrant woman who really lived and really died in our part of the world; but I also made up much of her story, much of her character, much of her heart, as I went along. So did John Estacio, in finding her true imaginative music. History gives us only hints of what really drives human beings to do what they do. Art must invent the rest of the portrait. In Frobisher I wanted to say something about the Far North of Canada - how it remains unknowable, yesterday and today; a magnificent riddle even to those inhabit it; an alluring phantom to outsiders who, whatever they pretend to be seeking, actually seek themselves there. Martin Frobisher – my fictional and historical Frobisher – seemed to me the perfect emblem of the power and the danger of that search. But I also wanted to make it clear that today's explorers - like the two young Alberta filmmakers who are my other central characters still feel the attraction and the dread of the North - the true and fictional, permanently unknowable North, which exists on real maps, and which exists within the farthest reaches of every human spirit: that which always remains to be discovered, which frightens and compels us, and always will.

Biographies



Bonni Baynton STAGE MANAGER

A graduate of The University of Calgary, Bonni Baynton has worked in stage management for over twenty-five years in theatre, dance, musical theatre, and opera. She has worked with Calgary Opera, Edmonton Opera, Alberta Theatre Projects, Theatre Calgary, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, Vertigo Mystery Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Neptune Theatre, and The Charlottetown Festival. Ms. Baynton was

last at The Banff Centre in 2005 to stage manage *Filumena*. Ms. Baynton is also a script supervisor for film and television and most recently worked on the TV series Dinosapien which was shot in Bragg Creek last summer. Ms. Baynton is ecstatic to be stage managing the 2nd production of *Frobisher*, having done the World Premiere in Calgary in January 2007. Ms. Baynton is based in Calgary, where she lives with her husband, Christopher Sprague, and their two sons William and David.



Bob and Colleen Bonniol PROJECTION DESIGNERS

Bob and Colleen have established a world wide reputation as innovative artists, weaving light and image into compelling production design. Recent credits include the multimedia

design for Sinatra Live At The Palladium in London's West End; production design for LeAnn Rimes' world tour in support of her new album, Family; production design for Nickelback's world tour for their multi-platinum All The Right Reasons album; projection design for the World Premiere of the opera Frobisher at the Calgary Opera; projection design for Pat Graney Dance's Vivian Girls, based on the works of Henry Darger; projection design for 3 Doors Down's 17 Days World Tour; production design for Cartel's Live DVD, Cartel/ Atlanta; projection design for Seattle Opera's Parsifal (Projection Designers of the Year, 2003); lighting and projection design for the Music Of Andrew Lloyd Webber In Concert (Triangle Award); lighting design for the National Tour of Victor/Victoria and The Papermill Playhouse Production; projection design for the National and International Tours of Footloose The Musical; and projection design for the critically acclaimed National Tour of Godspell. When not busy designing, the Bonniols teach projection design at the California Institute For the Arts. They are frequent lecturers, and have spoken and taught projection design at The Banff Center, LDI, and Western Washington University. They live in Seattle, Washington.



Tracy Dahl
GUEST MASTER CLASS TEACHER

Coloratura soprano, Tracy Dahl, has established herself as an important artist on the international concert and opera stages. Her flair as an actress, as well as her outstanding vocal abilities, have received high praise. Described as "a bright bird of her species" by the Vancouver Sun, "her extreme high notes" according to the Boston Globe, "are both easy and spectacular." Ms. Dahl has performed with

numerous opera companies and orchestras worldwide, and has performed solo recitals across North America and in France. Ms. Dahl has appeared regularly with Washington Opera in such roles as La Fée in *Cendrillon* and Marie in *La Fille du Régiment*. She debuted with the San Francisco Opera as Olympia opposite Plácido Domingo in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and returned as Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Lucia in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Her Metropolitan Opera debut was as Adele in *Die Fledermaus* and she returned to the Metropolitan as Zerbinetta and as Florestine in the world premiere and revival productions of *The Ghosts Of Versailles*. In the 2005/06 season, Ms. Dahl performs the roles of Lucie Ashton in *Lucie de Lammermoor* with Boston Lyric Opera and Mme. Mao in *Nixon In China* with Portland Opera. She's also scheduled to appear with Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, Phoenix Symphony, and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

Mhiran Danson-Faraday

PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR

An east-coaster from Halifax, Mhiran has officially fallen in love with the mountains on this, her first time working at The Banff Centre. A stage manager by trade, Mhiran has recently completed the Arts and Cultural Management Program at Grant MacEwan College, and has very much enjoyed the challenge and adventure of acting as program co-ordinator for the Opera As Theatre Program. As a stage manager, Mhiran has worked at the National Arts Centre, Centaur Theatre, Neptune Theatre, and The Charlottetown Festival, among others. Favorite credits include Shaw and Owen, her two little boys back east that she misses so much.



Jenna Douglas ASSISTANT REPETITEUR/COACH

Jenna will begin a MMUS in Collaborative Piano at the University of Western Ontario this fall. Her opera experience includes assistant repetiteur positions for *The Tender Land* and *Street Scene* at Opera NUOVA (2007) and *Frobisher* at The Banff Centre's Opera As Theatre Program (2007), as well as scenes from *Beatrice Clancy* and *The Nose*. Ms. Douglas is also experienced in art song and chamber music and is an active accompanist for singers and instrumentalists.

produced again at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa in April 2005, at the 2005 Banff Summer Arts Festival, and at Edmonton Opera in November 2005. *Filumena* was filmed for television and was broadcast on the CBC in March of 2006.

In addition to writing for the Vancouver Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, l'Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and the CBC Radio Orchestra, Mr. Estacio composed the pièce de concert for the 2001 Banff International String Quartet Competition. During the 2005/06 season, his works were also performed by the Houston Symphony, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Winnipeg Symphony, the Royal Conservatory Orchestra, Orchestra London, Thunder Bay Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, and the Edmonton Symphony. *Frobisher* marks Mr. Estacio's second opera with librettist John Murrell. They are also collaborating on a third original mainstage opera, with the working title *Lillian Alling*, commissioned by Vancouver Opera to premiere in the spring of 2010.



John Estacio COMPOSER

John Estacio has served as composer-inresidence for the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Pro Coro Canada, the Calgary Philharmonic, and Calgary Opera. These residencies yielded several orchestral and choral works including his opera *Filumena*. He has also written scores for productions of *Othello* and *Twelfth Night* at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton.

Mr. Estacio studied music and composition at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of British Columbia. He began his professional career after receiving an award in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's Canadian Composers Competition in 1992, and shortly thereafter began an eight-year residency with the Edmonton Symphony. His choral work Eulogies received the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors' 1999 National Choral Award for Outstanding Choral Composition. He has also received the Syncrude Award for innovative artistic direction for the Young Composers Project which he initiated while at the Edmonton Symphony. Estacio has received numerous SOCAN Foundation Young Composers Awards and has twice received SOCAN's Jan V. Matejcek Concert Music Award for being the Canadian composer to have received the most performances and broadcasts of his works in 2003.

CBC Records recently released *Frenergy, The Music Of John Estacio*, a CD featuring several of the orchestral works Estacio composed during his residencies in Edmonton and Calgary. This CD was nominated for two Juno Awards, including a nomination for Outstanding Classical Composition. The *Frenergy* CD also received the Western Canadian Music Award in 2005 for Outstanding Classical Recording Award. His string quartet composition, *Test Run* was also nominated for a Juno in 2003. Estacio's opera, *Filumena*, with libretto by John Murrell, co-commissioned and co-produced by The Banff Centre and Calgary Opera premiered in Calgary and Banff in 2003. It was

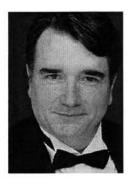


Laurence Ewashko

CHORUS MASTER

Former conductor of the Vienna Boys' Choir, Laurence Ewashko, is currently chorus master of Opera Lyra Ottawa. Mr. Laurence is also a baritone soloist, choral clinician, vocal coach, and adjudicator. He completed six years of post-graduate studies in Vienna with the assistance of the Canada Council. Mr. Ewashko received first-class honours from the Lied and Oratorio program at the Vienna

Conservatory and completed the Choral Conducting Programme at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst. As professor of choral studies and voice at the University of Ottawa, Mr. Laurence conducts the University's three choirs. He is also artistic director of the Outaouais Sacred Music Festival and is music director of the Ewashko Singers who perform regularly with the NAC Orchestra.



John Fanning
GUEST MASTER CLASS TEACHER

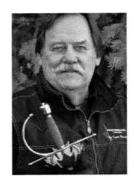
A veteran of eight seasons at the Metropolitan Opera, John Fanning's 2006/07 season began auspiciously in September with the role of Wotan in the Canadian Opera Company's (COC) production of Wagner's Das Rheingold. He was also heard as Gunther in Die Götterdämmerung and was praised for the power and commitment of both portrayals. He then toured Canada and the US performing Mozart's Requiem with Les

Violons du Roy, joined the National Arts Centre Orchestra for Messiah and sang the title role in the premiere of John Estacio's *Frobisher* for Calgary Opera. Appearing with many American opera companies including San Francisco, New York City, Minnesota, Kentucky, and Arizona he is a frequent guest of all major Canadian opera companies and orchestras. This season he returns to L'Opéra de Québec to sing lago in *Otello* and will perform his first Tonio in *Pagliacci* for Vancouver Opera. He will be Horace Tabor in Calgary Opera's *Ballad Of Baby Doe* and *Falstaff* in Edmonton. Mr. Fanning was featured as Firmin in *The Phantom Of The Opera*, both on the national tour and at the Pantages Theatre in Toronto. The operatic voice of many commercials, he starred in an episode of CBC's *Wind At My Back* and was prominently featured in Norman Jewison's film, *Moonstruck*.



Judith ForstGUEST MASTER CLASS TEACHER

Order of Canada recipient Judith Forst is an opera singer who has triumphed with all the leading opera houses in the world. She has been a staunch supporter of new composers, fellow performers, directors, and conductors, and has mentored young professionals and students in North America and abroad, helping many to become outstanding performers.



Jean-Pierre Fournier FIGHT SCENE INSTRUCTOR

Jean-Pierre Fournier was a graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Acting program in 1973, and the MFA Directing Program in 1998. He is co-ordinator of the Performance (Acting) stream with the Department of Theatre, Speech, and Music Performance at Mount Royal College. He is into his 35th year as an actor, fight director, director, and teacher. He is the Maitre d'Armes of Fight Directors, Canada

and one of its founding directors. He was recently accorded the prestigious Paddy Crean Award at The Banff Centre's International Paddy Crean Stage Combat Workshop for his influence and promotion of the historical study of Stage Combat at the International level. He has taught across Canada, the United States, England, and Norway with students from around the globe. Recent fight directing credits include Frobisher, Filumena, Dead Man Walking, Carmen, and Romeo et Juliette for Calgary Opera, and Romeo et Juliette for Opera Lyra in Ottawa. He co-directed fights for the Alberta Ballet's recent production of Romeo And Juliet. During the last 33 years, he has worked extensively in theatre, television, and film and has taught at universities and colleges across Canada, England, and the United States. He has worked as an actor and fight director at major theatres in Canada including three years at the Stratford Festival, the Citadel Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, the Vancouver Playhouse, Alberta Theatre Projects, and Theatre Calgary. Jean-Pierre is executive advisor and past vice president of Fight Directors, Canada, and an Honourary Member of the British Academy of Dramatic Combat. He is honoured to be a member of the collaborators on the immense and magnificent works of John Estacio and John Murrell.



Harry Frehner LIGHTING DESIGNER

Harry Frehner's recent work has included *Brassfire* for the 2006 Banff Summer Arts Festival, *Dead Man Walking* for Calgary Opera, *In Charcoal And Crimson* for Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, and the filming for broadcast of the Edmonton Opera production of *Filumena*. Past productions in Banff include *Festival Dance* (1992-2007), *Bones, Jackie O, Sticks & Stones, Wozzeck, School For Scandal, White*

Rose, El Cimarrón, and Cosi Fan Tutte. One of Canada's most prominent lighting designers, with experience in theatre, opera, and ballet, Frehner has worked with Calgary Opera, Edmonton Opera, the Citadel, Alberta Theatre Projects, Theatre Calgary, the Shaw and Stratford Festivals, Pacific Opera Victoria, Vancouver Opera, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Young People's Theatre, Canadian Opera Company, and the Neptune Theatre.



Andrea Grant
REPETITEUR/COACH

Andrea Grant received her Honours Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Wilfrid Laurier University, and went on to complete a Master of Music degree in Collaborative Piano from the University of Western Ontario. At the University of Toronto, Ms. Grant then received a Diploma in Operatic Performance, and she continues to work in the Opera Division as a member of the music staff. Ms. Grant is

also active as a freelance collaborative pianist, and enjoys a variety of experiences encompassing recital, opera, and musical theatre. Ms. Grant has been involved in the development and production of several new works with various companies, including Tapestry New Opera Works, Soundstreams Canada, Calgary Opera, and Omaha Opera. She most recently returned from working at Wexford Festival Opera, in Ireland.



John Hess

MUSIC DIRECTOR/MUSICAL DRAMATURGE

John Hess is the co-artistic director of Queen of Puddings Music Theatre. He also directs the Masters Program in Collaborative Piano at the University of Western Ontario. At The Banff Centre, he served as associate artistic director of the 20th Century Opera and Song Program. John performs frequently with many of Canada's finest singers and is currently preparing a recital tour with Ben Heppner for September 2007.



Sue LePage SET/COSTUME/PROPS DESIGNER

Winner of two Dora Mavor Moore Awards, Toronto-based set and costume designer Sue LePage has worked on more than 100 productions in theatre and opera. Recent credits include Arms And The Man, Candida, The Magic Fire, Bus Stop, and Pygmalion for the Shaw Festival, The Ventriloquist and Zadie's Shoes for Factory Theatre, Filumena for Calgary Opera, The Banff Centre, and the National Arts

Centre, No Exit, The Human Voice, and The Elephant Song for the Stratford Festival, Fish Wrap, Capture Me, Perfect Pie, The Four Lives Of Marie, The Memory Of Water, and Lion In The Streets for Tarragon Theatre, The Lonesome West, Billy Bishop GoesTo War (national tour), The Glorious 12th, Dancing At Lughnasa, and Death And The Maiden for CanStage. LePage has also worked on productions with the Charlottetown Festival, Citadel Theatre, Theatre Columbus, The Grand Theatre (London, On.), National Arts Centre, Native Earth, Neptune Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille, Theatre Calgary, and the Vancouver Playhouse.



Michael Meraw
ASSOCIATE VOCAL TEACHER

Baritone Michael Meraw is an engaging and exciting presence on the operatic stage as well as the concert platform. Increasingly in demand, he has been hailed by critics not only for his "rich virile sound..." but also his abilities as an actor. "The most satisfying performer in every regard is Michael Meraw: a very beautiful voice and a true sense of the comic." Recently Mr. Meraw has sung

Verdi for Opera in Concert, Estacio for Edmonton Opera, and workshopped Estacio's new opera *Frobisher* for The Banff Centre. He has also been busy giving recitals of Strauss, Mahler, Schumann, and Debussy for various recital societies around the country. Mr. Meraw also has an active teaching career in Montréal, both as a professor at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University and as a Professeur Invité at l'Université de Montréal.



John Murrell, O.C., A.O.E. LIBRETTIST

John Murrell is one of the most frequently produced of all Canadian playwrights, as well as a highly respected arts advocate, mentor, and consultant. His plays have been translated into 15 different languages and performed in more than 30 countries around the world. He has worked as head of the Banff Playwrights Colony (1986-1989), as head of the Theatre Section of the Canada Council For The Arts

(1988-1992), as artistic director/executive producer of Theatre Arts at The Banff Centre (1999-2005), and as executive artistic director of Performing Arts at The Banff Centre (2005 to the present).

John Murrell's work for the stage includes *Waiting For The Parade, Memoir, Farther West, Democracy*, and *The Faraway Nearby*. His dramatic adaptation of *The Odyssey* was first performed as part of the Banff Summer Arts Festival 2001, and was remounted by Manitoba Theatre for Young People in Winnipeg, and subsequently by the National Arts Centre of Canada.

In February of 2003, the successful new opera *Filumena*, a co-production between The Banff Centre and Calgary Opera, with music by John Estacio and libretto by Murrell, was premiered in Calgary and in Banff. *Filumena* was produced by The Banff Centre, in April 2005, as the centrepiece of The Alberta Scene at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Presented by the Edmonton Opera in November, 2005, *Filumena* was filmed for CBC-TV's Opening Night series, and has twice been nationally telecast. *Frobisher* enjoyed its world premiere at Calgary Opera on January 27th, 2007. Estacio and Murrell have been commissioned to create their third operatic work for the Vancouver Opera in 2010; Murrell has also been recently announced

as the librettist for another new opera, commissioned from composer/conductor Bramwell Tovey, to receive its premiere in Calgary Opera's 2010-2011 season.

In 2002, John Murrell received the coveted Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts, and was presented with the Alberta Order of Excellence; in 2003, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada; in 2005, he received the inaugural Lieutenant Governor of Alberta's Arts Award, and an honourary Doctor of Laws degree from The University of Calgary.



Alexander Platt

Alexander Platt is Resident conductor and music advisor of Chicago Opera Theatre, and music director of the Maverick Concert in Woodstock, New York, the oldest summer chamber-music festival in America. He is also music director of the Waukesha Symphony in Wisconsin and the Marion Indiana Philharmonic, and has just been appointed principal conductor of the Boca

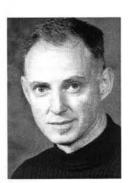
Raton Philharmonic. Educated at Yale College, he was then a Marshall Scholar of King's College, Cambridge; there he made his professional debut at Aldeburgh, and his revival of Britten's Owen Wingrove won high praise in the London press. Following conducting fellowships at Aspen and Tanglewood, he served as apprentice conductor of the Minnesota Opera, making his debut conducting Colin Graham's production of Madama Butterfly. At Chicago Opera Theatre, Mr. Platt has led the Chicago premieres of Death In Venice, Nixon In China, and A Midsummer Night's Dream, and the double-bill of Erwartung/Bluebeard's Castle with Samuel Ramey and Nancy Gustafson. He has also conducted the Houston, Charlotte, and Columbus Symphonies; the Minnesota Orchestra, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and the City of London Sinfonia; and the Freiburg Philharmonic in Germany, and the Aalborg Symphony in Denmark. He has recorded for National Public Radio, the South-West German Radio, and the BBC, and has earned acclaim from the major newspapers of New York, London, and Chicago.



Kelly Robinson STAGE DIRECTOR

Kelly Robinson is the program head for The Banff Centre's Opera As Theatre Program. He has directed the Centre's productions of Filumena, *The Magic Flute*, and *The Marriage*

Of Figaro. With a career that spans theatre, opera, and film, Kelly Robinson's award-winning work as a director and choreographer has been seen at the Stratford and Shaw Festivals, the National Arts Centre, CanStage, the Palace Theatre in New York, the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre, Theatre Royal in Plymouth, England, and in London's West End. His work in opera includes the companies of Vancouver, Portland, Dallas, Minnesota, and Québec City. Film and television credits include choreography for Columbia Pictures, CBC, NBC, and ABC Television. Recent work as a director includes the world premiere of the dance musical, VIDA! for The Luminato Festival and Mirvish Productions at Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre, Frobisher for Calgary Opera and The Banff Centre, High Society for the Shaw Festival, Guys And Dolls for the Stratford Festival, and Dead Man Walking for Calgary Opera. Mr. Robinson is a former associate artistic director of the Banff Music Theatre Ensemble, the Edmonton Opera, and Comus Music Theatre in Toronto. He holds a law degree from York University, and is the director of creative development for Toronto's Mirvish Productions.



Gérard ThéorêtASSISTANT DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER

Currently a full professor at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Gérard is a former soloist with Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Trained in Britain as an actor, he has performed roles from Shakespeare to Lloyd Webber. Some recent career highlights include playing Gus/Plato in a production of *Cats* in 2006 and directing his first opera, *Dido And Aeneas*, in 2007. He works internationally as a master teacher,

choreographer, and director. Returning to Banff always brings back fond memories of his student days in the Dance Program.



Kinza Tyrrell REPETITEUR/COACH

Victoria native Kinza Tyrrell has a Doctorate in Piano and Vocal Coaching. For the past three years, she has been on faculty at the Canadian Opera Company where Wagner's *Ring Cycle* was launched at the Four Seasons Centre. She is the new principle repetiteur and music director of VOIS at Vancouver Opera this fall.

David Wadley
ORCHESTRA MANAGER

David Wadley was born in Sault Sainte Marie, Canada in 1958. A violist in both the Emperor Quartet and the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (KWS) since 1984, he is soon to commence a master in composition at the University of Calgary. In addition to activities as a player, teacher, and coach, he has enjoyed a parallel life in music administration. He was involved in running the National Youth Orchestra in the mid-1980s and later spent several seasons as the KWS Personnel Manager. A term as KWS librarian soon followed. This varied background provides a depth of experience which he hopes to share with this summer's orchestra participants.



Michael Waller
ASSISTANT STAGE DIRECTOR/ACTING TEACHER

Michael Waller has directed, written, and acted throughout North America. Directing highlights include: *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Othello* (Dora Nomination-Outstanding Direction); Eric Woolfe's *Dear Boss* (Dora Nomination-Outstanding Direction); *The Babysitter* (Dora Nomination-Outstanding Production). He has assistant-directed at the Stratford and Shaw Festivals, also Calgary and Edmonton Opera.

Other highlights include directing *Suor Angelica* (Puccini) and *L'enfant et les Sortileges* (Ravel). He has written two radio dramas for CBC, is a recipient of the Ken Macdougall Award for Most Promising Director, and is a graduate of the acting program of Carnegie Mellon University. Most importantly, Michael is husband to Louise and father to Dahlia.



Robin Wheeler REPETITEUR/COACH

Robin Wheeler is in steady demand as a coach and accompanist throughout Canada and the United States. Music director for Toronto's *Opera In Concert*, conductor for Toronto Operetta Theatre and Opera McGill, are just a few of his professional credits. For more than five years Mr. Wheeler has served as head coach and assistant conductor with Opera North in New Hampshire. He has been

heard on both Vermont PBS and the CBC accompanying vocal recitals. Robin Wheeler is currently music director of the University of Montréal's Opera Training Program.



Aaron Agulay Baritone WAGMANITE

Aaron Agulay received an Artist Diploma from Oberlin Conservatory, studying with world renowned vocal pedagogue Richard Miller in 2006. At Oberlin, performances include; baritone soloist in *Dvo ák's Te Deum*, Schubert's *Mass In G+*, Brahm's *Deutches Requiem*, Figaro in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, under the baton of Eve Queler, and Marquis de la Force

in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmelites*. Some credits include Herr/soloist in Hartmann's *Wachsfigurenkabinette*, (Aspen Opera Theatre Centre), Cascada in *The Merry Widow* with Orchestra London and Maximilian in Bernstein's *Candide* (UWOpera). This is Aaron's second summer participating in the OAT program at The Banff Centre. In fall 2007, Aaron will join Leon Major's acclaimed Opera Studio in Maryland.



Catharin Carew Mezzo soprano FILM PERSON

Mezzo soprano Catharin Carew's most recent engagements include the Baroness in Barber's *Vanessa* (Lisl Wirth Black Box Festival, Montréal), Mrs. Splinters in Aaron Copland's *The TenderLand* (Opera Nuova), as well as Ana in Sokolovic's *Sirenes* (Soundstreams: Glenn Gould Studio, Toronto). Other notable credits include the role of Maeve in the contemporary

comic opera *The Midnight Court* at the Linbury Studio, Covent Garden, having premiered the role with Queen of Puddings Music Theatre at the Toronto Harbourfront Centre, and James MacMillan's dramatic cycle for mezzo, *Raising Sparks* (2005 BBC Barbican Composer Weekend).



Lara Ciekiewicz Soprano ANNA UNDERSTUDY

Lara Ciekiewicz has been praised for her "...wonderfully dark, rich soprano voice... marvellous...clear and true" (Winnipeg Free Press). She is pursuing her Masters in Music in Opera at McGill University and holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts from the University of Winnipeg. Recent credits include Bach's Mass In B Minor for the Winnipeg Symphony

Orchestra, the title role in Barber's *Vanessa* for Opera McGill, Antonia in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* for Opera NUOVA, Yum-Yum in *The Mikado* for the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Winnipeg, and Anna in the world premiere of Michael Matthews' *Prince Kaspar* for GroundSwell.



Benjamin Covey
Baritone
FROBISHER

Career highlights include performances of Messiah with top Canadian orchestras, recitals for the Aldeburgh Connection and appearances at the International Bach Festival. Operas this season have been Die Fledermaus, *The Rape Of Lucretia*, and *Frobisher*, and next season Benjamin will be a member of Calgary Opera's Developing Artist Program.



Leslie Davis Mezzo soprano QUEEN ELIZABETH

Leslie Davis from Halifax, Nova Scotia, recently completed her MMUS at the University of Victoria with Benjamin Butterfield. Her recent credits include Rosina in Rossini's *The Barber Of Seville* (Pacific Opera Victoria's Young Artists Program), the title role in Offenbach's *La Perichole*, and Ludmila in Smetana's *Prodaná nevêsta* (Opera NUOVA). Her concert

repertoire includes Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*, Mozart's *Requiem Mass*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* (University of Victoria). This fall Leslie will be pursuing further studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, England.



Heather Jewson Mezzo soprano JESSICA

Heather is very excited to be involved in the Banff Summer Arts Festival's production of *Frobisher*. Her most recent opera credits include Lucretia in *The Rape Of Lucretia* (Britten), and Prince Orlofsky in J. Stuass' *Die Fledermaus*. This past April, Heather was a finalist in the prestigious Lyndon Woodside Competition, and had the honour of singing at

Carnegie Hall in New York City. She has also just completed her Masters of Music, at the University of Toronto, where she studied with Jean MacPhail.



Andrew Love
Baritone
WAGMAN

Andrew Love completed his Bachelor of Arts at Rocky Mountain College where he studied Voice and Conducting. On top of being a featured soloist while attending the college, he was also the recipient of numerous scholarships. Andrew spent the last year as part of Calgary Opera's Emerging Artist Development program. Highlights from the

program were: performing the role of Brentano in Dean Burry's *The Brothers Grimm*, as well as covering the role of Wagman, and performing in the world premiere of *Frobisher*. Most recently, Andrew performed the role of Mr. Olsen in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* while participating in the Opera NUOVA summer program in Edmonton, Alberta.



Thomas Macleay
Tenor
MICHAEL

Thomas Macleay studied music at the University of Alberta, McGill, and The Banff Centre before going on to further studies in opera at the CNIPAL in Marseille. After making his European debut in operas by Verdi, Stradella, Damase, Honegger & Ibert, Thomas returned to Canada and has appeared in seven Montréal Opera productions including

Norma, Turn Of The Screw, Il Tabaro, Lakmé, and Il Mondo della Luna. Thomas also sang the Young Sailor in Tristan und Isolde with the Montréal Symphony Orchestra under Kent Nagano. Other conductors with whom he has collaborated include Jean-Marie Zeitouni, Bernard Labadie, Paul Nadler, Patric Davin, Dominique Trottein, Evelino Pido, and François-Xavier Bilger. His concert repertoire includes Messiah, Mendelssohn's Elias, Mozart's Requiem, and many other sacred works. Upcoming performances include Frobisher at The Banff Centre, Carmen with Edmonton Opera and L'Heure espagnol with L'Atelier Lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal. He is currently a member of Montréal Opera's Atelier Lyrique.



Christopher Mayell
Tenor
TREVOR

Christopher Mayell has just completed his MMUS in Literature and Performance at the University of Western Ontario. Recent operatic appearances include Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* and Piquillo in *La Périchole*. A native of Kingston, Ontario, Christopher will be traveling West this fall to join the ranks of Calgary Opera as an Emerging Artist.



David Menzies Tenor FILM PERSON

Canadian tenor David Menzies has performed in opera and concert with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, McGill Chamber Orchestra, McGill Symphony Orchestra, Banff Summer Arts Festival, Opera McGill, Studio Musique Ancienne de Montréal, L'Orchestre Symphonique de l'Île, Viva Voce (Montréal), McGill Choral Society, Manitoba

Opera, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Winnipeg Singers, Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir, Groundswell New Music Concert Series, and the Winnipeg New Music Festival. David has been heard in concert works such as Carmina Burana, Israel In Egypt, Messiah, Acis And Galatea, Mozart Requiem and Vespers, Mendelssohn "Lobgesang" Symphony, and numerous works by J.S. Bach. A truly versatile artist, his repertoire encompasses the Baroque to Contemporary, including roles such as; Anatol (Vanessa), Colas (Colas et Colinette), Bastien (Bastien und Bastienne), Tigrane (Radamisto), Governor (Candide), Laurie (Little Women), Molqi (Death Of Klinghoffer), Kaspar (Amahl And The Night Visitors), Agenore (Il Re Pastore), Belfiore (La finta giardinera), and Monteverdi's Orfeo. A former educator in the public school system, with degrees in Music and Education from the University of Manitoba, he obtained his Masters in Vocal Performance from McGill University under the tutelage of Stefano Algieri, and will commence Doctoral studies in music in Fall 2007.



Marie-Eve Munger Soprano FILM PERSON

Coloratura soprano Marie-Eve Munger is happy to be returning to Banff this summer where last year she performed the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*. Laureate of the Wirth Scholarship, she just graduated with a master degree in solo voice from the Schulich School of Music at McGill University. Recent performances include appearances with the

Montréal Symphony Orchestra, the New Haven Symphony, the McGill Chamber Orchestra, and a concert tour with Daniel Taylor. Recent opera performances include Cunégonde, the creation of Évangline 2, Mabel, and the Queen of the Night. She is a CBC young artist 2007 and as a laureate of the Jeunes Ambassadeurs Lyriques 2007, she will be representing Canada in two international competition in Europe this fall.



Keith O'Brien Baritione MARK

Keith O'Brien recently sang the role of Sergeant Fiorello in Edmonton Opera's Barber Of Seville, and Njegus in Toronto Operetta Theatre's Merry Widow. Other roles include Jacob Grimm (Brothers Grimm) Don Andrès (La Périchole), Aeneas (Dido And Aeneas), Papageno (Die Zauberflöte), Father (Hansel & Gretel), Action (West Side Story), Proprietor (Assassins), Peter

(Company), Carl-Magnus (A Little Night Music), Freddy (My Fair Lady), and Prince/Wolf (Into The Woods).



Lauren Phillips Mezzo soprano WAGMANITE

Lauren Phillips, mezzo, has a Masters degree from the University of Western Ontario. Roles performed include Nancy (Albert Herring), Dorabella, and Mother/Grandmother (Little Red Riding Hood). She won the Vivian Asfar opera aria competition award (2007), and will sing Frederic in Opera Lyra Ottawa's concert version of Mignon in September.



Christina Tannous Soprano

ANNA

Soprano Christina Tannous is back in Banff this summer to perform Anna in *Frobisher*. She has previously taken part in the Banff Summer Arts Festival by singing the roles of Pamina and Filumena. Recently, Christina has toured the country to perform *Annabelle Canto*, a youth concert presented by the Jeunesses musicales du Canada. Christina is the winner of the

1999 CBC Competition for Young Performers. She has been a soloist with the Montréal symphony orchestra, the CNA orchestra, the CBC Vancouver orchestra, the Opéra de Québec, and the Kammeroper in Vienna.



Indre Viskontas Soprano KATE

Lithuanian-Canadian soprano Indre Viskontas was born and raised in Toronto, where she began her musical training at the Royal Conservatory of Music. Viskontas was recently heard as Margot in *The Merry Widow* with West Bay Opera and in the title role in *Iolanthe* with the Lyric Theater of San José. Her other roles include the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*),

Miss Pinkerton (Menotti, *The Old Maid And The Thief*), Torbisco (Offenbach, *Les Bavards*), and Cobweb (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). She made her professional oratorio debut in 2006 singing the *Saint-Saëns Christmas Oratorio* with the Mission Dolores Choir in San Francisco where she is currently completing her Master of Music in Voice Performance. In addition to receiving scholarships from the Opera Buffs of Los Angeles, Viskontas is a 2007 winner in the East Bay Opera League Competition. She also holds a PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience from UCLA. At Banff, she will sing the role of Kate in *Frobisher*.



Carrie Wiebe Soprano WAGMANITE

Carrie Jayne Wiebe, soprano, received a
Bachelor of Music in Performance from the
University of Manitoba and an Artist Diploma
in Opera from the Vancouver Academy of
Music. She has studied with Mel Braun, David
Meek, and Jean MacPhail. At the Vancouver
Academy of Music, Carry performed the roles
of Greta Fiorentino in Kurt Weil's Street Scene,

Elettra in Mozart's Idomeneo, and Adele in Strauss' Die Fledermaus. In June of 2006, she performed the role of Euridice in Magi Productions' presentation of Orfeo ed Euridice, and in February 2005, she sung the role of the Countess with Burnaby Lyric Opera in The Marriage Of Figaro. She has also performed the role of Donna Elvira in Mozart's Don Giovanni with the NUOVA opera program in Edmonton. Carrie was a finalist in the 2005 Metropolitan Opera Regional Auditons held in Seattle, Washington. She was a member of the Opera As Theatre Program in 2005 and 2006 at The Banff Centre. As a concert performer, Carrie has been soloist in several performances of Handel's Messiah and Vivaldi's Gloria. In 2007, she participated in Soundstreams Canada's productions of Sirens and Steve Reich's Music For Mallets, Organ And Voices. She has acted as soloist with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, the Winnipeg Singers, the University of Manitoba Singers, and the University of Manitoba Orchestra. Carrie has also participated in Masterclass with Judith Forst, Alan Monk, Nico and Carol Castel, Tracy Dahl, and Jane Eaglen.

The Banff Centre Theatre Arts Staff

John Murrell, executive artistic director, performing arts

ADMINISTRATION

Susan Adams, manager of operations Kurt Bagnell, manager of presentations/ front-of-house Constance Brill, administrative assistant

Ruth Buskevicius, administrative assistant
David Cseke, assistant front-of-house manager
Myra Ferguson, manager of administration
Casey Prescott, program administrator
Héloïse Veillette, program co-ordinator
Cindy Willick, administrative assistant

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT & TECHNICAL DIRECTION

John Avery, director of production
Robina Cook, production administration
Laura Lindeblom*, production administration
Roxanne Prokop, production stage manager
Melissa Novecosky*, production stage manager
Robert Rombough, technical director
Andrea Rocchio*, technical direction
Colin Stoker*, technical direction
JP Laframboise, production technician
Jason Pouliot**, production assistant
Samantha Hindle*, swing technician

LIGHTING DEPARTMENT

Dave Ingraham, head of lighting Kalyna Conrad, lighting technician Darrell Shaw, lighting technician Matthew Gilbutowicz*, lighting technician Melanie Hankewich*, lighting technician Paphavee Limkul*, lighting technician Ashley Rose*, lighting technician Dean Smith*, lighting technician

SOUND DEPARTMENT

Lyle Fish, head of sound Branden Charlton, sound technician Joe Micallef*, sound technician Dustin Vaux*, sound technician

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Jaime Carlson, stage carpenter
Tom Heemskerk, stage carpenter
lan Henderson, Stage Carpenter
Steve Mahaney, stage carpenter
Elizabeth Nutting, Stage Carpenter
Donnie Osler, stage carpenter
Sarah Darnbrough*, stage carpenter
Arunwadi Leewananthawet*, stage carpenter
Daniel Smurlick*, stage carpenter

SCENIC PAINT DEPARTMENT Jennifer Hedge, head scenic artist

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Scott Freeman, head scenic carpenter Bruce McComb, scenic/stage carpenter Viviane Dohle*, scenic/stage carpenter Lindsey Woelfle*, scenic/stage carpenter

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Patsy Thomas, head of wardrobe Dudith Darough, cutter Diane Klisko, cutter Angie White, cutter Nancy Hooper, milliner

Heather Bloxham, first hand Morgan Mackintosh, first hand Hazel Whitehead, first hand Karen Beames, boots and shoes Cornelia Braconnier, stitcher Kendra Cooper, assistant to the head of wardrobe Emily Farrauto, stitcher June Gunn, stitcher Heather Westergard, wardrobe maintenance technician Natalie Crittenden**, stitcher Darian Flinn**, stitcher Jaylene Wiebe**, stitcher Daintry Chapple*, milliner Myrna-Lori Collins*, wardrobe technician Natalie Leung*, wardrobe technician Carol Stephenson*, wardrobe technician Mike Suzuki*, wardrobe technician Allison Underwood*, wardrobe technician

DYE SHOP DEPARTMENT Chris Duffelen, head of dye shop Emma Carrico*, dyer

WIGS AND MAKE-UP DEPARTMENT Carol Chambers, head of wigs and make-up Lloyd Bell, wigs and make-up artist Michael Devanney, wigs and make-up artist Akiko Baba*, wigs and make-up artist Andie Ho*, wigs and make-up artist

Mallory Reeves*, wigs and make-up artist

Vicki Skandalaki*, wigs and make-up artist

* indicates Work study Participant

** indicates Work Experience Participant

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