

THE BANFF CENTRE

School of Fine Arts

presents

DEIRDRE

An Ancient and Noble Tale retold by

John Coulter (1888 -)

for music by

Healey Willan (1880 - 1968)

Commissioned and broadcast by CBC in 1947 and 1951.

First stage performance: Toronto, 1965, by Opera School, University of Toronto

First professional performance: Toronto, 1966, by the Canadian Opera Company

Performances on

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11th, SATURDAY, AUGUST 12th,

MONDAY, AUGUST 14th

Voice/Opera Department Chairman: BERNARD TURGEON

Musical Director: ALFRED STROMBERGS

Stage Director: ANDREW DOWNIE

Set Designer: JOHN W. GRAHAM

Costume Designer: LILIANE JOHNSON

Lighting Designer: DAVID HIGNELL

PROGRAM NOTES

When it was decided that this year the unifying theme to run through the presentations by the performing arts at the School should be one of Canadian works, the Voice/Opera Division chose to present "Deirdre." All the singers to be students of the School.

When "Deirdre" was presented in the 1966 Canadian Opera Company's season at the O'Keefe Centre the singer in the role of "Conochar" was Bernard Turgeon, now Director of the Voice/Opera Division.

The story of "Deirdre" is from the ancient saga of the Red Branch Knights. In the 1890's there was an upsurge in creative interest in literature and the arts in Ireland which was then still struggling for independence from the United Kingdom. This struggle was temporarily frustrated by the fall of Parnall. However Irishmen of the middle and upper classes, many of them protestants, turned to the ancient epics of the Celtic past that had been recently translated by Celtic scholars. (Something similar had taken place in Scotland close to a century earlier when Sir Walter Scott put together his Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, writing down, often from word of mouth, the ancient Scottish ballads.)

This renewed interest in Irish literature led to the founding of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin which supplied a much needed refreshment to British theatre with the wholly Irish plays of John Millington Synge and others. Until then Dublin had depended entirely on imports from London for its theatrical fare.

Synge's last and unfinished play was "Deirdre of the Sorrows." It is perhaps interesting to remark that Synge always treated death as a relief from struggle. In his play "Riders to the Sea" "Maurya", after losing the last of her six sons, all drowned at sea off the Aran Islands, says "There is nothing more the sea can do to me." Deirdre, in Synge's play says, "In the grave we're safe surely." And Synge, himself, dying, with "Deirdre of the Sorrows" unfinished and the young actress Molly Allgood, his fiancée, at his side, said "It is no use fighting death any longer"; and then turned to the wall and died.

It should be made clear that John Coulter's text is based on the legend itself and not on Synge's play.

Early thoughts on the staging of the opera were that the players should "bend to go through doors, stoop to avoid beams, slither in bog, stutter off stones, clamber over rocks . . . the stage to suggest the background to their lives and the ruggedness of it . . . these are not mythical Wagnerian beings who never cook and wash up." The grandeur of the characters in "Deirdre", and their stature, is in the simple response they have to uncomplicated but searing situations. Fate is not feared, fate is met full-face, suddenly.

Their grandeur is also in the fact that their story touched the hearts of the Irish so that it survived through the centuries, passed by word of mouth, when many another tale must have flourished to be soon forgotten.

ANDREW DOWNIE

Original Program Notes for 1965 Production

The legend of Deirdre and the Sons of Usnagh is from the saga of the Red Branch Knights of Ulster — an order of chivalry in the druidic pre-Christian era. The Red Branch House was at Avan Macha, or Emania, on the site of the present Navan Fort near Armagh, the city which is still the ecclesiastical capital of Ulster and all of Ireland. The Ulster of today, Northern Ireland, was then Ullah; the Scotland of today was Alba.

The ruthless and ambitious Conochar — Conor-mac-Nessa — had been made king when his mother, Nessa, induced the old king, Fergus, as the price of marrying her, to abdicate in favour of her son. A druid prophesy had foretold the doom of Conochar and the fate of Naisi and his brothers, sons of Usnagh, through love of the founding girl, Deirdre. The tragic fulfillment of that prophesy is the story of the opera.

JOHN COULTER

SYNOPSIS

Act I

Scene 1. The woods near the Red Branch House at Avan Macha

Scene 2. Deirdre's hut on Fuah mountain

Scene 3. Naisi's camp near the woods of Deirdre's hut

Act II

Scene 1. Fuah Mountain

Scene 2. Deirdre's hut

Act III

Scene 1. Conochar's house at Avan Macha

Scene 2. A rocky coast in Alba (Scotland)

Scene 3 and 4. The woods near the Red Branch House at Avan Macha

CAST

CATHVA, Druid High-Priest Jean-Pierre Favreau, Montreal, Quebec

CONOCHAR, King of Ullah Ronald Patton, Findlay, Ohio

FERGUS, his Step-father, ex-King of Ullah Edouard Montpetit, Montreal, Quebec

NAISI } Lary Benson, Edmonton, Alberta

ARDAN } Princes of Ullah, the sons of Usnagh .. David Dunbar, Calgary, Alberta

AINNLE } Nigel Lemon, Edmonton, Alberta

A SPY Franklyn Giffen, Edmonton, Alberta

CHIEF FIGHTER C. Patrick Ormos, Montreal, Quebec

DEIRDRE, a founding girl

ward of Conochar August 11, 14 Carol Ann Looman, Calgary, Alberta

August 12 Iris Fraser, Edmonton, Alberta

LEVERCHAM, Deirdre's nurse August 11, 14 Marie Laferrière, Montreal, Quebec

August 12 Andrea Mellis, Edmonton, Alberta

LEVERCHAM'S HELPERS August 11, 14 Sharon Lewis, Waterford, Pennsylvania

August 12 Donna Fownes, Montreal, Quebec

August 11, 14 Jacqueline Preuss, Barrhead, Alberta

August 12 Betty Kolodziej, Lethbridge, Alberta

A NEIGHBOR August 11, 14 Donna Fownes, Montreal, Quebec

August 12 Sharon Lewis, Waterford, Pennsylvania

Druid Priests; Fighters of Various Clans; Men of Alba; Women and Servants.

TIME: About the beginning of the Christian era.

PLACE: Ullah and Alba (Ulster and Scotland).

CHORUS

Women:

Sonya Baehr

Patricia Carroll

Sigrid Davis

Lorill Drummond

Marcia Freedman

Sandra Gavinchuk

Mary Haines

Nina Hanson

Judith Holswick

Jo-Ann Hrynyk

Betty Kolodziej

Ruth Laufenberg

Sonia Meroniuk

Jacqueline Preuss

Fighters:

Alan Crompton

Jim Croy

Paul Fiorino

Robert Grist

Tim Mallandaine

Kent Nagano

Michael Turgeon

Druids and Men of Alba:

George Cotton

Richard Davis

Kim Deal

George Jardine

Donald McMann

Roger Ohlsen

George Ross

Terrance Shipowick

Reid Spencer

ORCHESTRA

FIRST VIOLINS

Dolores Turgeon, Edmonton, Alberta
(Concert Mistress)
Ronald Milne, West Vancouver, B.C.
Ruben Gurevich, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Karen Lynee Ferren, Winnipeg, Man.

SECOND VIOLINS

Hong Youl Kim, Edmonton, Alberta
Peggy Hills, London, Ontario
Sylvia Novak, London, Ontario
Paul Meister, Kitchener, Ontario

VIOLAS

Stephen Wilkes, Vancouver, B.C.
Jonathan Taylor, Calgary, Alberta

CELLOS

John Kadz, Calgary, Alberta
Joel S. Ferren, Winnipeg, Manitoba

BASS

Ann Atkinson, Calgary, Alberta

FLUTES

Philippa Moore, Calgary, Alberta
Dodie Layton, St. Catharines, Ontario

OBOE

John Shaw, Calgary, Alberta

CLARINETS

Thomas Cameron, Charlotte, N.C.
Stan Fisher, London, Ontario

BASSOON

Thomas Pearce, Vancouver, B.C.

FRENCH HORNS

James Atkinson, Calgary, Alberta
David Hoyt, Edmonton, Alberta
John Ellis, Edmonton, Alberta
Richard Herne, St. Catharines, Ontario

TRUMPETS

Brian Roberts, London, Ontario
Bill Dimmer, Edmonton, Alberta
Eric Schultz, Edmonton, Alberta

TROMBONES

Sharman King, Calgary, Alberta
Mark Lindsay, Niagara Falls, Ontario
Nathan Zassman, Chicago, Illinois

TUBA

Gregory Osadetz, St. Catharines, Ont.

PERCUSSION

Ross Strachan, Calgary, Alberta

PIANO

Sandra Atkinson, Calgary, Alberta

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager: David Walsh
Assistant Stage Managers: Renee Blowers, Terry Pope
Crew: Ron Burrow, John McLaughlin, Bruce
Leighton, Janet Burke, Marlene Almond
Lights: Eric Richer, Janet Smith,
Sherryl Clelland, Deborah Hills
Sound: Randy Cormack
Properties: Marianne Doherty, Frances Blau,
Mark Silver
Wardrobe: Betty Keller, Nancy Goodfellow
Flymen: George Venini, Cheri Sutton
Make-up Supervisor: John Cox

MUSIC STAFF

Coaches: Marie Thérèse Paquin, Harold Brown,
Sandra Atkinson
Pianists: Terry Pope, Laura Burton
Assistant to Mr. Downie: Deirdre Tarrant
Chorus Master: Renée Blowers
Chorus Librarian: Betty Kolodziej
Orchestra Leader: Dolores Turgeon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Production by arrangement with Berandol Music Limited.
The cooperation of Actors' Equity Association with whose permission George Ross
is appearing.
Complimentary Refreshments will be served in the Theatre Foyer
after each evening performance.

THE BANFF CENTRE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

- | | |
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| D. S. R. Leighton | - Director, The Banff Centre |
| Neil Armstrong | - Festival Coordinator and Associate Director |
| J. C. K. Madsen | - Associate Director, School of Fine Arts |
| Don Becker | - Associate Director, Administrative Services |
| Laszlo L. Funtek | - Artistic Advisor and Manager of The Centre's Theatre Complex |
| Betty Poaps | - Assistant Manager, Communications |
| Nic Roggeman | - Assistant Manager, School of Fine Arts |
| Lynn Shervill | - Staff Writer |
| Jane Raby | - Secretary |

THEATRE COMPLEX - Permanent Staff

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Laszlo L. Funtek | - Artistic Director, Manager |
| Lloyd Montour | - House Manager |
| Malcolm Kendall | - Lighting Director |
| David Hignell | - Stage Manager |
| Robert Lefroy | - Assistant Stage Manager |
| Myra Ferguson | - Secretary |

1972 SUMMER SHOWCASE - Production Staff

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| John W. Graham | - Head, Stagecraft Division |
| Liliane Johnson | - Head, Costume Department |
| John Cox | - Make-up |

TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS

Marian Hood, Ronald Burrow, Gavin Jones, Murray Palmer, Ronald Fedoruk, Peggy Rae, Leslie Primeau, Randy Cormack, John McLaughlin, Den Mooney

COSTUME ASSISTANTS

Mrs. Lois Paul, Mrs. Betty Keller, Pam Whitelaw, Monica Boyd, Pam Wagers, Nancy Goodfellow, Mary-Jane Werishora, Cathy Henderson, Joan Peterson