

OPERA LAURIER AND LOOSE TEA MUSIC THEATRE
PRESENT

HISTORY BY HER

AN ODE TO STORIES BY FEMALE COMPOSERS

A triple bill including operas by
Monica Pearce, with librettist John Terauds
Cecilia Livingston, with librettist Monica Pearce
Ashley Seaward, with librettist Troy Defour

Emily Hamper, Musical Director
Alaina Viau, Stage Director
Holly Meyer-Dymny, Lighting and Set Designer
Inez Khan, Costume Realization
Matthew Kensett, Technical Coordinator
Jennifer Schamehorn, Stage Manager
Siobhan Richardson, Fight Director
Matt Richardson, Fight Director

Friday, March 4th at 7:30 pm
Saturday, March 5th at 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 6th at 3:00 pm
Maureen Forrester Recital Hall



PROGRAM

Etiquette

Monica Pearce
John Terauds

Dorothy Parker Olivia Haramis (Fri/Sun) Grace Ronan (Sat)
Emily Post Julia Gwyn (Fri/Sun) Alysse Sailor (Sat)
Nancy Astor Madison Marino (Fri/Sun) MacKenzie Sechi (Sat)

Singing only Softly

Cecilia Livingston
Monica Pearce
Alaina Viau

Anne 1 Danielle Aprile (Fri) Keiko Larocque (Sat) Olivia Haramis (Sun)
Anne 2 Olivia Haramis (Fri) Madison Marino (Sat) Danielle Aprile (Sun)

INTERMISSION

Borderless (a Pirate Opera)

Ashley Seaward
Troy Defour
Alaina Viau

A Co-commission between Loose Tea Music Theatre and Opera Laurier, generously funded by the Faculty of Music Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Fund (FOMEDIF)

Mark Claire Dingee (Fri/Sun) MacKenzie Sechi (Sat)
Bon Julia Gwyn (Fri/Sun) Danielle Aprile (Sat)
Calicko Jack Ben Wallace^
Moon Grace Ronan (Cover: Olivia Haramis)
Ollob Alysse Sailor (Cover: Keiko Larocque)
Reinly Katrina Elms
Ferret Paula Turnbull (Cover: Grace Ronan)
Crew Hand Zackary Evans-Whitley*

Pyrates Annika Joy, Kaitlyn Kasha, Will Ainsbury, Nicole Cordeau,
Ben Wallace, Katrina Elms

Men of the Ship Lindsay Scott, Nai Lee, Gabriella Bell-Divincenzo, Eryn
Russel, Daisy Kurelek, William Morrissey, Morgan
Ballantyne, Alexander Muth, Nikolai Rigden-Briscall

***Opera Laurier Alumni Guest Performer ^Student Volunteer**

ORCHESTRA

Etiquette

Conductor Emily Hamper
Pianist Marko Pejanovic
Clarinet Ann Murdocca

Singing Only Softly

Pianist Emily Hamper

Borderless (a Pirate Opera)

Conductor Emily Hamper
Clarinet Ann Murdocca
Horn Megan Storey
Harp Daniella Kistemaker
Violin William Caldwell
Cello Maegan Goodmurphy
Percussion Cassandra Wolff

MUSICAL PREPARATION

Musical Director Emily Hamper
Administration Coordinator Kimberly Barber
Coach Accompanists Emily Hamper, Anna Ronai
Rehearsal Pianists Emily Hamper, Marko Pejanovic
Studio Teachers Kimberly Barber, Leslie Fagan, Brandon Leis, James McLean, Jennie Such, Daniel Cabena, Colin Ainsworth

TECHNICAL PREPARATION

Stage Director Alaina Viau
Fight Directors Siobhan Richardson
Matt Richardson
Set and Lighting Designer Holly Meyer-Dymny
Technical Director Matthew Kensett
Assistant Technical Director Naomi Damasco
Costume Realization Inez Khan
Stitcher/Tailor Mary-Lou Mason
Stage Manager Jennifer Schamehorn
Assistant Stage Managers Keiko Larocque (Etiquette)
Claire Dingee (Singing only Softly)
Madison Marino (Borderless)

STUDENT TECHNICAL TEAMS

Props and Costumes Coordinator
Hair and Makeup Coordinator
Tech Coordinator
Marketing/Publicity Coordinator

Julia Gwyn
Olivia Haramis
Keiko Larocque
Danielle Aprile

SPECIAL THANKS TO

The Stratford Festival Warehouse
Jennie Wannacott and Sandy Davis
University of Toronto, Michelle Vanderhayden
G&G Carpentry
Maria Kouznetsova
Andrew Mellanby
Melanie Toolsie and Andrew Bridgemohan

SYNOPSES

Etiquette

We open on Dorothy Parker, pouring herself a dirty gin martini and writing an unflattering review of Emily Post's *Etiquette* for *The New Yorker*. Known for her sarcasm and wit, she emphasises that "there is no force great enough" to make her follow Emily Post's rules of etiquette - not even Missus Price Post, herself. The scene shifts to Mrs. Post and her friend, Nancy Astor, having tea in a garden. They flatter each other with niceties and make polite conversation, but their remarks conceal much harsher feelings. They have both suffered hardships and discuss the difficulties of being a woman, the importance of good behaviour, and the character of a gentleman. Dorothy returns to the stage, putting the finishing touches on her review. She refutes, once more, Mrs. Price's rules, and instead gives her readers her own piece of advice.

Singing only Softly

Loose Tea Music Theatre is bringing their DORA nominated opera, *Singing Only Softly*, to stage for the second time with the talent at Opera Laurier. The concept of this opera was developed by Alaina Viau, composed by Cecilia Livingston and Libretto by Monica Pearce.

Inspired by the redacted entries and newly discovered pages of Anne Frank's diary, this opera explores a more nuanced character than the one that is presented in the redacted diary. On the contrary to Otto Frank's version of flattening his daughter's character to that of an innocent child, *Singing Only Softly* showcases the more complex, self-aware and self-represented woman Anne Frank articulated herself to be.

Borderless (a Pirate Opera)

We open on a vast blue and black sea. Waters crash and release sprays of frigid waters. The Moon, rippling over the sea, reflecting beams of light. On the waves below a bronzed ship carries a crew of people.

Mark sits among the crew and writes in their journal. They are seeking to escape their past, and have joined the military. The crew members grow restless and hungry, before finally settling into a moment of calm.

Out of the darkness, a group of Pyrates silently climb aboard the ship. Bon, the leader of the Pyrates, quickly takes down a crew member before engaging Mark, who dodges his attacks and attempts to engage in a fight before he is interrupted and disarmed by Calicko Jack. At Bon's command, Mark and the captives are taken to the Pyrate's ship.

Having returned to their ship, Bon and Calicko Jack celebrate their victory and share a rare private moment before they are interrupted by their rambunctious crew who lead the crew onto the deck. Mark demands the crew be freed, and refuses Bon's demand to join his crew.

Left to the mercy of Bon's crew, he skillfully evades attack and frees the Crew Hand, who is quickly killed by Calicko Jack, leaving Mark alone. He engages in a fight with Bon, who slices into their chest, revealing blood stained bandages. Bon notices this and demands he be left to take care of the prisoner alone.

Bon leads Mark deep into the ship, bringing them into a private cabin, where Bon offers Mark his help. He unbuttons their bloodstained shirt, revealing tight bindings wrapped around Mark's chest. He guides Mark's hands to do the same, revealing identical bindings. Bon and Mark embrace in awe of finally meeting someone like them, and the two walk away to begin their journey together.

BIOGRAPHIES

Emily Hamper, Musical Director

Emily Hamper has earned an excellent reputation for her exceptional skills as a vocal coach and accompanist. Singers from her coaching studio perform with major opera companies and symphony orchestras around the world. Over an international career spanning twenty-five years, she has worked as a rehearsal pianist, coach, and assistant conductor for many prominent opera companies and organizations.

Highly sought-after as a collaborator for voice recitals, notable appearances include Die Winterreise and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra's "Virée Classique" with Michael Schade, and recitals at L'Opéra National de Paris, Music Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company, and Queensland Music Festival with Phillip Addis. Additionally, Emily has accompanied recitals for Calgary Opera, Festival Orford, Stratford Summer Music, and other presenters in Canada, the USA, and Europe. In 2011 she won the Best Collaborative Pianist Prize at the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition and performed across Canada on the National Winner's Tour. Performances have been broadcast on CBC Radio, Radio-Canada, Classical 96.3 FM and Vermont Public Radio.

Engaged as a répétiteur and social audition accompanist by Calgary Opera, l'Opéra de Montréal, Green Mountain Opera Festival, Opera Atelier and Pacific Opera Victoria, Ms. Hamper was production director for a performance based on Manon at the Muskoka Opera Festival in 2013. Her genuine interest in new music has resulted in engagements with Soundstreams Canada and Tapestry Opera, the workshopping of several new Canadian operas, and the commission of a new song cycle by composer Erik Ross and poet Zachariah Wells.

Emily maintains a passion for teaching and mentoring. Recently appointed Conductor and Music Director of Opera at Wilfrid Laurier University, she has served on the faculty of the Vancouver International Song Institute, the University of Toronto, l'Université de Montréal, The Ban Centre, and Dolora Zajick's Institute for Young Dramatic Voices. Emily is a co-founder and co-artistic director of the Stratford Summer Music Vocal Academy, an élite training program for singers and pianists in Stratford Ontario. In 2020 she joined Brott Opera as Artistic Administrator and Principal Coach. In addition to her work with singers, Ms. Hamper has performed orchestral keyboards with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and London Symphonia, and as a chamber musician with the INNERchamber Ensemble, Stratford.

Born and raised in the Vancouver area, Emily received her undergraduate musical training at UBC. She furthered her studies at the Opera Division at the University of Toronto, where she was appointed to the music staff upon graduation. She is an alumna of the prestigious Merola Opera Program at the San Francisco Opera, and was the recipient of a Merola Career Grant for studies in Munich. She currently lives in Stratford, Ontario.

Alaina Viau, Stage Director (she/they)

Alaina is a daring director, creator and producer based in Toronto. She is the Founder and Executive Artistic Director of award nominated opera company Loose Tea Music Theatre where they creates genre defying productions that center on critical social issues, raising underrepresented voices and cross-cultural relationships. They are defined by seeking to push and challenge the opera experience: “The stunning originality of Viau’s vision...grip the imagination.” – Opera Going Toronto. Alaina is a queer disabled artist seeking a new framework for safe and compassionate creation processes that dismantle hierarchical practices. She is Director-in-Residence at the Nation Theatre School in 2022 and was a finalist in Crow’s Theatre national RBC Rising Star Emerging Directors Prize who “will make a strong impact on the performing arts in Canada”.

This season Alaina is directing the fall and winter operas at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University focusing on responsible presentation of traditional operas and contemporary Canadian opera performance. Alaina is co-creator for new a non-binary opera based on the story of genderfluid and trailblazing pirates, Anne Bonny and Mary Read and *The Museum of the Lost and Found* with Olivia Shortt. She is directing *The Musical Stage Co’s One Song Glory*, and a film adaptation of *Emily the Way You Are*, an opera about artist Emily Carr by Jana Skarecky.

The 19-20 season saw Alaina DORA nominated for Outstanding New Opera for *Singing Only Softly*, a new opera based on the redacted and missing pages of Anne Frank’s Diary. With Loose Tea Music Theatre, Alaina launched the BIPOC Composer Librettist Development Program through to support new emerging opera creators and leads the production of new works by diverse creators. Her first film short was an official selection at the USA Film Festival Dallas.

Alaina was Resident Director at Toronto City Opera for the 18-19 season directing *Le nozze di figaro* and *La traviata*, and Artistic Director of Ottawa indie company SOPAC for two seasons having directed *Suor Angelica*, *Il Pagliacci* and *Cendrillon*. They directed *L’Histoire du Soldat* for the Toronto Summer Music Festival, presented a sold out original work *Whose Opera is it Anyway?* at Music and Beyond Festival and directed *Thirteen Strings* Chamber Orchestra’s 40th Anniversary show with *L’isola disabitata*. They have a background in arts admin, producing and production having previously been the Assistant Production Manager at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Opera and Orchestra Manager at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

www.alainaviau.com

“Always searching and provocative direction of Alaina Viau” – WholeNote Magazine

Siobhan Richardson and Matt Richardson, Fight Directors

Matt and Siobhan are professional actors and fight directors. They have over 50 years of professional stage combat experience between them, including performance, teaching (professional development, high schools, universities, and international symposia) and directing fights for hundreds of productions. Their company, Burning Mountain, is committed to continuous professional development for the growth of the art form and the artist. They are known world-wide for their approach to stage combat: centering on the actor's process and time-tested safety principles, with biomechanical specificity of technique from foundation principles of numerous martial arts.

Holly Meyer-Dymny, Set and Lighting Designer

Holly Meyer-Dymny (she/her) is an award-winning Canadian theatre designer, painter, mentor, educator, and a board member of the Associated Designers of Canada IA 659. She creates Set, Lighting, and Projection Designs for the stage. Her work has been seen on large and small stages across the country and focuses on collaboration, holistic design, and accessible, greener practices. Her designs have been called gorgeous, whimsical, and a visual feast.

She teaches Set Design through BP Theatre Professional Training Program and has designed and mentored at Dalhousie University, Ryerson School of Performance, Laurier University, and Sheridan College.

This year Holly will be undertaking her research project Small Green Things: Exploring Greener Model Making Techniques. This work is generously supported by the Canada Council for the Arts.

When she isn't designing for the stage you can find her painting, baking, gardening, reading a good novel, or somewhere in the woods with Penny the dog.

Find more about Holly at: [@hollymeyerdymny](#)

Inez Khan, Costume Realization

Inez Khan's varied experience in costume and wardrobe in everything from theatre to opera makes her an invaluable member of the Production Team at Laurier, where her costume wizardry has been on display for Opera Laurier productions since 2015 as the mastermind behind costume realizations for Cunning Little Vixen, Tales of Hoffmann and The Tender Land. Educated at Sheridan College, she has worked at many of Ontario's finest theatre companies and educational institutions as seamstress, props builder,

wardrobe attendant, wardrobe head and coordinator. She has worked with Theatre Aquarius, Canadian Opera Company, Mirvish Productions, Grand Theatre, Drayton Entertainment, Fanshawe College and the University of Toronto's Opera Division, among many others. She is Wardrobe Head at the Stratford Festival's Tom Patterson Theatre and has worked with the Festival since 1999.