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**Sunday May 17, 2015**

Jeanne Lamon Hall, 427 Bloor Street West, Toronto

New Music Concerts presents

## **Michel Gotteville and The Belgian Connection**

**Éthel Guéret** soprano | **Gregory Oh** piano

**NMC Ensemble** | **Robert Aitken** solo flute & direction

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## The Belgian Connection

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*Programme:*

**Henri Pousseur** (Belgium 1929-2009)

*Sur le Qui-Vive: 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement* (1985)

Éthel Guéret soprano

**Henri Pousseur**

*Huitième Vue sur les jardins interdits* (1973; arr. Michel Gotteville 2015)

Dianne Aitken flute Cary Ebli oboe Max Christie clarinet Fraser Jackson bassoon  
Gregory Oh piano Rick Sacks percussion Stephen Sitarski violin Douglas Perry viola  
David Hetherington cello Adam Scime contrabass Brian Current conductor

*World Premiere*

**Jean-Luc Fafchamps** (Belgium 1960)

*Lettre Soufie: Sh(in) (Pour moi, dans le silence...)* (2009)

Dianne Aitken flute Max Christie clarinet Rick Sacks percussion Gregory Oh piano  
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**Pierre Bartholomé** (Belgium 1937)

*Chant de route "À la mémoire de Henri Pousseur"* (2011)

Éthel Guéret soprano Dianne Aitken flute Max Christie clarinet Gregory Oh piano  
Stephen Sitarski violin David Hetherington violoncello Robert Aitken conductor

— *Intermission* —

**Karel Goeyvaerts** (Belgium 1923-1993)

*Aquarius-Tango* (1984) and *Pas à pas* (1985)

Gregory Oh piano

**Michel Gotteville** (Canada 1950)

*Henricare's Flight* (2015)

Robert Aitken solo flute Dianne Aitken flute Cary Ebli oboe Max Christie clarinet Fraser Jackson bassoon  
Rick Sacks percussion Gregory Oh synthesizer Stephen Sitarski violin Douglas Perry viola  
David Hetherington cello Adam Scime contrabass Brian Current conductor  
*World Premiere, New Music Concerts / Canada Council commission*

**Henri Pousseur**

*Sur le Qui-Vive: 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement* (1985) - reprise

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## Henri Pousseur

Already before 1950, the musical studies of Henri Pousseur (Belgium, 1929-2009) had seen him introduced to Schoenberg's dodecaphonism and expressionism, and to Webern's music. Quickly befriended by Boulez, Goeyvaerts, Stockhausen and the like, he was to partake actively in the musical revolution of the 50s and 60s, with prominent contributions to the development of integral serialism, of aleatoric composition, of electroacoustic and mixed music, as well by his works as by his theoretical writings.

A major turn in his approach of music and composition occurred in the first years of the 60s when he sought to go beyond the auto-imposed language and stylistic limitations that characterized the music of his generation. Labeled (by himself) "le refus du refus," initiated while working on his emblematic "mobile opera" *Votre Faust* (with the French writer Michel Butor), this turn could be summed up by two concepts: "generalized periodicity" and the "integrative reconsideration of harmony," that would allow the reintegration of repetition, thematism and consonance in a larger vocabulary and language that would allow borrowings, allusions and crossovers, all these being considered as a continuation and a generalization of integral serialism. Other exemplary works of this new attitude are Pousseur's *Couleurs croisées*, *Vue sur les jardins interdits*, *La seconde apothéose de Rameau*, but one could associate Berio's *Sinfonia* and Stockhausen's *Mantra* with the same trend, which can be considered as an anticipation of musical postmodernism.

Pousseur's socialist political opinions and concrete-utopian striving for a better society (inspired notably by the German philosopher Ernst Bloch) are everywhere to be seen, understood and felt in his works and writings. It also permeated his conception and accomplishments in the educational and pedagogical domains, notably as director of the Conservatoire royal de Liège (1975-1986) and as inspirer of the *Institut de pédagogie musicale* of Paris.

### Henri Pousseur - *Sur le Qui-Vive: 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement* (1985)

This monody is the third movement of *Sur le qui-vive*, a ten-movement work for voice and five instrumentalists, composed in 1985 on texts by Pousseur's long-time friend and collaborator, Michel Butor. These texts convey different visions of the future and are organized here in such a succession that, along with the music, they raise to euphoric utopia (movement 1 to 6) and then fall to funereal realism (the remaining 4 movements). The monody, whose four verses all start with a promising *Un jour* (One day), is located on the ascending side of the form. Its general melodic contour itself is slowly ascending, following the words of Butor (from the caverns and marshes to the sky and stars). The intervallic structure of the monody tends also to go along with the semantic purposes and

the significance of the text: augmentation of the initial interval of each verse, on *Un jour*; evocative variations of the “modal network of notes” (the “harmonic climate” - HP) used for each verse, with its increasing contraction in the high register; etc.

The choice of this monody to open and close this homage concert to Henri Pousseur and to his essential utopian convictions, was for me evident. The structure of my own piece, *Henricare's Flight*, its general ascending direction, some of its motivic aspects even, owe a great deal to it. — *Michel Gotteville*

### **Henri Pousseur - Huitième Vue sur les jardins interdits (1973; arr. Michel Gotteville 2015)**

Originally composed for saxophone quartet and premiered at a saxophone congress in Bordeaux in 1973, *Vue sur les jardins interdits* has undergone a series of arrangements, mostly by Pousseur himself, but also by a former student (Jean-Louis Robert) and by a musician long acquainted with the composer (Jean-Pierre Peuvion). This arrangement by Michel Gotteville will be the eighth.

The piece is built on a choral by Samuel Scheidt (XVIIth century), heard about halfway through the form, with its harmonic movement slightly amplified. All the rest of the music is deduced from it, becoming all the more foreign and modern as one goes away from the quote, upwards or downwards. As Pousseur was well on the way in the composition process came the news of the death of Bruno Maderna, an Italian composer and conductor who was also a very generous and dedicated figure of European contemporary music, and as such, well appreciated by Pousseur. This event has influenced the ending of *Vue* towards its introspective character.

An emblematic work in Pousseur's catalog, representative of his effort to technically and organically integrate apparently irreconcilable harmonic styles, *Vue* is also one of the backbones of another major contribution of the composer, *La seconde apothéose de Rameau*, an extensive “musical polemic” for large ensemble, composed in 1981. — *Michel Gotteville*

## **Jean-Luc Fafchamps**

Jean-Luc Fafchamps (Bruxelles, 1960) is active both as a pianist and as a composer. As a member of the Ensemble Ictus, Jean-Luc Fafchamps participated in numerous projects (premieres of works by Lindberg, Reich, Aperghis, Leroux, etc) but also in multi-disciplinary performances, particularly accompanying dance (for Rosas / Anne-Teresa de Keersmaeker) and theatre. He contributed to numerous recordings (on

the Sub Rosa label) with the Ictus Ensemble, with the Bureau des Pianistes, with several singers, and as a soloist.

First designed for theatre and dance, his work gradually shifted to pure music. After devoting himself to writing for various groups in which the piano played a central role, his interest for non-tempered harmonies and polyphony of timbre led him to other sound combinations. He is currently developing several long-term projects in which his taste for paradoxical constructions and his sense of synthesis are blossoming into mutually referential pieces. Since 2000, he has worked on the development of a vast network of cycles – the *Sufi Letters* – a manifesto for writing, for stylistic openness as rhetoric, and for the use of analog correspondences as the basis for a system.

His compositions were hailed by the UNESCO International Rostrum of Young Composers and won him the Octave des Musiques Classiques 2006. The Ictus Ensemble, the Ensemble Intercontemporain, Musiques Nouvelles, the Liège Philharmonic Orchestra, the Danel quartet, and many more have performed his work, notably during such international festivals as Présence, Ars Musica, the Venice Biennale, and in Warsaw, Budapest, Sidney, Berlin, Lima, Copenhagen, etc. The last part of his triptych for piano *Back to...* was written as imposed work for the semi-finals of the Queen Elisabeth Competition in 2010. His work is recorded on Sub Rosa (five monographic recordings) and on Fuga Libera. He has taught piano, chamber music and applied and interactive composition. He currently teaches musical analysis at Arts (Conservatoire de Mons).

### **Jean-Luc Fafchamps - Lettre Soufie: Sh(in) (2009)**

*Sufi Letter: Sh(in) (Pour moi, dans le silence...)* for flute, clarinet, percussion, piano and string trio was commissioned by the Spectra Ensemble and premiered in Ghent on April 4, 2009, conducted by Filip Rathe. *Shin* is the ninth piece in a large project “Lettres Soufies,” a reflection on musical writing, time, memory and form, in which I exploit the symbolism as described by certain Sufi masters — Sufism is a mysticism related to Islam — as a key to poetic correspondences. Every single piece is, at the same time, a research into a specific sonorous status (with a material voyaging freely from one piece to another) and an implementation or a transformational logic.

*Shin*, associated with acceptance, white aloe, the cleansing fire, constitutes a form of *lamento*, or rather a status of abandonment and renunciation where a silent and restrained lamentation is dreamt, a plaint addressed to no other one, like a stupor enclosed too intimately. Timid remnants [souvenirs or premonitions] on a background of murmurs. From this state, through a slow transformation — *svelte* in this case like an advent of the murmur, a recognition of its reality — emerge the necessary conditions in expectation of consolation. — *Jean-Luc Fafchamps*

## ■ Pierre Bartholomé

The professional activities of Pierre Bartholomé (Bruxelles, 1937) include both domains of composition and interpretation. As a friend of Henri Pousseur as early as 1962, he co-founded the *Musique Nouvelle* ensemble and the Centre de recherches musicales de Wallonie. His catalogue of works includes three operas, nine symphonic pieces, a Requiem, an oratorio, two String Quartets, an Organ Book, song cycles, and many pieces for ensembles, duos and solo instruments. His works have been played in Europe, in the United States, in Canada and in China. Many are available on CDs. Both as a pianist and then as a conductor, his repertoire encompasses from Bach to Xénakis (Haydn, Beethoven, Schumann, Wagner, Mahler, Debussy, Bartok, Stravinsky, Berio, Boulez, Messiaen, Stockhausen, Takemitsu) with premieres of Berio, Boesmans, Bon, Brouwer, Constant, de Pablo, Gagneux, Goeyvaerts, Höller, Joachim, Korelis, Ledoux, Longtin, Manguashka, Frédérick Martin, Miroglio, Denis Pousseur, Henri Pousseur, Reibel, Rens, Robert, Rzewski, Van Rossum, Weeks and many others. As artistic director of the Orchestre philharmonique de Liège (Belgium) for 22 seasons, he conducted at home and on tour (USA, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, China, Japan), collaborated with many great soloists and developed a substantial discography. He taught musical analysis at the Brussels Conservatory. He is teacher *emeritus* at the Catholic University of Louvain (Leuven), where he was the first composer in residence. He is currently a member of the Royal Academy of Belgium.

### Pierre Bartholomé - *Chant de route "À la mémoire de Henri Pousseur"* (2011)

Henri Pousseur died as I was preparing a concert of his works to celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. His disappearance left the music world orphaned of one of its most significant composers and thinkers. A year later, given a commission from the Belgian Ensemble ON, I composed this piece, *Chant de route*, to his memory. It was premiered at the Brussels Conservatory, in the great concert hall.

Henri Pousseur wrote several poems towards the end of his life and the title of one of these was used for my own piece. I wanted to write a vocal piece. Anyone familiar with Pousseur knew how a magnificent and very moving praxis he had of popular singing. I therefore borrowed some verses from his poem *Chant de route*, along with some others taken from a long text written by Michel Butor after Henri's death. I linked these fragments with my some of my own words, words of calling. *Chant de route* is a piece about death, about time that flees, about noise and agitation, about solitude also, the solitude of a voice, which longs to be heard from a whirling desert. It is a violent and rapid music, a kind of hasty walking, of a rondo type, from which music seems to dwindle, after some last jolts. The voice of Henri Pousseur is here omnipresent, even in some melodic inflexions. — Pierre Bartholomé

## ■ Karel Goeyvaerts

After studies at the Royal Flemish Music Conservatory in Antwerp, Karel Goeyvaerts (Antwerp, 1923-1993) continued in composition under Darius Milhaud and analysis with Olivier Messiaen at the National Conservatory in Paris. The *Sonata for Two Pianos* (1950-51), can be seen as a synthesis of certain of Messiaen's ideas with Webern's application of dodecaphony, of which Goeyvaerts made detailed analyses. This sonata was to have a major influence on the young generation of avant-gardists, particularly on Karlheinz Stockhausen. In 1953, Goeyvaerts and Stockhausen, together with several other composers, realised the first music produced by means of electronic generators. In 1957, Goeyvaerts temporarily withdrew from the musical world, although he continued to compose. In 1970, he was appointed by the Belgian Radio and Television (BRT) as producer at the Institute for Psycho-Acoustic and Electronic Music (IPEM) in Ghent, and later on, head producer for New Music at Belgian Radio 3 in Brussels. In 1985, he was chosen Chairperson of the UNESCO International Composers' Rostrum. Goeyvaerts was a member of the Royal Academy for Science, Letters and Fine Arts of Belgium. In 1992, he was named as first holder of the KBC Chair for New Music in the department of Musicology at the Catholic University of Louvain (Leuven). His residency was interrupted by his sudden death in 1993.

After being a pioneer of the generalization of serial technique and of pure or mixed electronic music in the 50s and 60s, Goeyvaerts thereafter developed a very personal style of experimental, aleatoric and finally repetitive and neo-tonal music. Keeping his bent for abstraction since the strictly serial music of the 1950s, Goeyvaerts remained an innovative artist to the end of his life, despite the many changes in style and apparently restorative movements he went through. In his *opus ultimum*, the large-scale opera *Aquarius* (1983-93), all these elements flow together.

### Karel Goeyvaerts - *Aquarius-Tango* (1984) and *Pas à pas* (1985)

These two works exemplify the style of Goeyvaerts' later period, extending from 1975 to the composer's death in 1993 and stamped with a minimalism / evolutive repetitivism label. Although the works of this period (often associated with the use of consonances and of modal or neo-tonal harmonic contents) would appear to be in complete opposition with the "integral serialism" and experimentalism characteristic of Goeyvaerts' preceding 25 years, a more attentive audition and analysis will show a remarkable constancy of attitude: similar construction techniques lead to similarly well controlled, almost austere formal behaviours.

Both piano pieces are based upon materials taken from the "opera" *Aquarius*, a large-scale *opus* that would occupy the composer until his death. Scored for 8 sopranos and 8 baritones

(mostly heard in groups rather than as soloists) and orchestra, with no real libretto and no precise plot or staging instructions, invoking an apocalyptic harmonious societal form, the work was bound to arouse admiration in his colleague and compatriot Henri Pousseur, because of its stylistic eclecticism, of its integrative qualities and its sociological thematic concerns, enough to want to honour the memory of Goeyvaerts through an equally large-scaled *Aquarius-Mémorial*, composed between 1994 and 1999.

If the *Aquarius-Tango* is to be played "avec une élégance sophistiquée et généreuse," *Pas à pas* will be perceived as more violent and direct. — *Michel Gotteville*

## ■ Michel Gotteville

After composition studies with Gilles Tremblay at the Montréal Conservatory, and then with Karlheinz Stockhausen and Henri Pousseur in Europe, Michel Gotteville (born in Montréal in 1950) returned to his native city in 1978, starting a professional life dedicated mostly to composing and teaching. He later completed a PhD in composition at the Université de Montréal (under Serge Garant, John Rea and Marcelle Deschênes).

He has composed works for and has been played by numerous groups and soloists, including the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec, the Ensemble contemporain de Montréal, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal under Charles Dutoit, the the Quatuors Molinari and Bozzini, the Trio Fibonacci, pianists Louise Bessette, Bruce Mather, and Marc Couroux, New Music Concerts and Arraymusic (Toronto), the Aventa Ensemble (Victoria), the Crash Ensemble (Dublin), the Camerata de las Americas (México), the Hilliard Ensemble (London), etc. His works have been performed in Montréal, Québec, Toronto, Vancouver, New-York, Metz, London, Paris, Liège, Mons, Bonn, Köln, Mexico, Victoria, Winnipeg, Calgary, and have received numerous broadcasts.

Michel Gotteville received the prestigious Prix Serge-Garant 1994 (awarded by la Fondation Émile-Nelligan) in recognition for the overall quality of his work. His piece *Chute/Parachute* (1989) has been broadcast in more than 27 countries. He also created several works in collaboration with visual artists and choreographers, or in collective works with fellow composers. He headed or collaborated in the organization of a number of music events (around Henri Pousseur, Pierre Bartholomé, other Belgian or Mexican composers, etc), wrote many specialized or general articles on music creation, took part in many composition juries, etc. Michel Gotteville has taught composition and analysis at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal since 1997. In March 2008, New Music Concerts of Toronto dedicated the *Gotteville and his protégés* concert to his music and that of his former students.

## Michel Gotteville - *Henricare's Flight* (2015)

*Henricare's Flight* is dedicated to the memory of Henri Pousseur (1929-2009). As a composer of the post-war generation, along with Boulez, Stockhausen, Berio, Nono, Goeyvaerts, etc., Pousseur had been profoundly involved in the musical avant-garde adventure of that period (development of new serial techniques, of electroacoustic and aleatoric music, etc.), until he felt, at the turn of the 1960s, the need to go beyond the collectively self-imposed limits of this adventure. His effort, his "refus du refus," led him to reintegrate in his musical language elements that were temporarily discarded by his generation (consonance, thematism, periodicity, repetition, etc) and to further develop techniques allowing this reintegration. Works like *Votre Faust*, *Couleurs croisées*, *Vue sur les jardins interdits* and *La seconde apothéose de Rameau* are accomplished examples of this almost "pre-postmodern" reorientation.

A well respected composer, pedagogue and theoretician, Henri Pousseur was also a politically committed man. Highly sensitive to the injustices of our world, he often expressed in his own works his profound desire of a better future for humanity, notably inspired by the writings of the German philosopher Ernst Bloch. In Pousseur, the *konkrete Utopie* of the latter took the form of a new version of the myth of Icarus, where the hero could come closer to the sun because of heat resisting wings he had build for himself; a metaphor of the quest for an ideal humanity for which we are responsible to work patiently.

As a gift for Pousseur's 70th birthday, I composed in 1999 a short piano piece whose title, *Henricare, parti lécher les étoiles*, associated a fragment of a poem by Michel Butor to a composite name now reused for *Henricare's Flight*. A unique movement from the lowest register to the highest notes is common to both works, here expanded over 20 minutes. This movement is heard in the solo flute part as well as in the accompanying ensemble.

While composing this *elegy*, a strange image took shape : that of a group of *shamans* or priests — "impersonated" by the instrumentalists — who accompany a dying person or commemorate his death. The solo flute would then be the voice of that person, closely embraced by the microtonal synthesizer playing an accordion sound (this omnipresent shining shadow could very well evoke the acouphens associated with the hyperacusia suffered by Pousseur in his last years). I also imagined a group of these *shamans* (the instrumental ensemble) imitating the taking-off, the flight, the movement of the gigantically large wings of this departing Icarus, with the percussion punctuating hieratically the processional ceremony.

Composed as an homage to a man with whom I studied and worked between 1976 and 1978, and whose ideas and works have been of profound influence on my own, *Henricare's Flight* is also thankfully dedicated to flutist, composer and artistic director Robert Aitken, who offered me the occasion of this project, as well as to the musicians and collaborators of New Music Concerts. It was funded in part by the Canada Council for the Arts.

— Michel Gonneville, *March 8th*, 2015

followed without interruption by the reprise of:

**Henri Pousseur - *Sur le Qui-Vive: 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement* (1985)**

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## ■ Performers

**Robert Aitken** has been honoured with the Order of Canada and is a Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France). In 1970, having previously served as principal flute for both the Vancouver and Toronto Symphony Orchestras, Aitken embarked on a solo career that has taken him to virtually every corner of the globe. He has more than 70 recordings to his credit and such notables as John Cage, George Crumb, Elliott Carter, Toru Takemitsu, Gilles Tremblay, John Beckwith and Bruce Mather have dedicated works to him. In 2003 he was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Flute Association (USA). In 2004, he retired as Professor für Flöte at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany, a position he had held for 16 years. In 2009 Aitken was the recipient Canada's largest arts award, the prestigious Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts. As a composer, he holds Bachelor and Masters degrees from the University of Toronto and all of his works are published by Universal Edition, Salabert, Ricordi and Peer Music. Robert Aitken was director of the Banff Centre Winter Program in Music, founder and artistic director of Music Today, Music at Shawnigan and co-founder, with Norma Beecroft, of New Music Concerts which he has directed since its inception in 1971.

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**Brian Current** has conducted a wide range of contemporary repertoire from Ligeti and Varèse to George Benjamin and Magnus Lindberg. Through his international work as a composer he has brought many previously unheard pieces to Canada, including music by Akira Nishimura, Enno Poppe, Fabien Levy and Stefan Niculescu. Described by *The Globe and Mail* as a conductor "with assurance and no undue fuss," Brian has been featured conducting with Soundstreams, Continuum, New Music Concerts, Esprit Orchestra New Waves festival, the Windsor Symphony, Voca d'ell Arte (Italy), Maniac Star, and the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra. In April of 2011 Brian conducted his chamber opera *Airline Icarus* in fully staged productions in both Verbania, Italy and Toronto as well as on a Juno

Award-winning Naxos disc. Since 2008 Brian has been the director of the New Music Ensemble of The Glenn Gould School (The Royal Conservatory), which is active in performing works for chamber orchestra in venues throughout Toronto. Young musicians are encouraged to commission and perform new works throughout their professional careers.

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**Éthel Guéret** has performed several roles on the stage in Quebec at the Opéra de Montréal, most notably Sophie in *Werther*, Flora in *The Turn of the Screw*, and Constance in *Les Dialogues des Carmélites*. Under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, she sang the roles of Amor in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Yniold in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and Blonde in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Éthel has enjoyed appearances in the roles of l'Enfant in *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* with the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Barbarina at the Opéra de Québec, and Flora at the Manitoba Opera. She also performed in *Carmina Burana* at the Festival International de Lanaudière and was Marie in *Wozzeck* at the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde. In Europe, she has appeared at the Opéra de Genève, Opéra de Marseille, Opéra de Montpellier, Opéra de Metz and Orchestre Baroque du Montauban. Éthel is particularly interested in the creative process that evolves naturally from her artistic approach. She has contributed to several premieres with the company Chants Libres. With Quatuor Bozzini, she premiered the cantata *Hozhro* by Michel Gonneville. The film that was subsequently made from this performance was presented at the 30th International Festival of Films on Art in 2012.

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**Gregory Oh** gained his notoriety as a "new music revolutionary" but tends to wander the genres. Holding graduate degrees from the University of Toronto and University of Michigan, Gregory has a repertoire spanning five centuries, and recent work has seen him appear in places from the legendary techno club Berghain in Berlin to Pop Montreal to FIMAV to the Wordless Music Series at the Lincoln Centre. Gregory is the artistic director of Toca Loca and the Open Ears Festival and a frequent guest conductor of Continuum Contemporary Music, CONTACT and Arraymusic. He has also conducted and coached at San Diego Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, Volcano Theatre, Lyric Opera San Diego, Theatre Direct, Tapestry New Opera, Canadian Rep Theatre, Banff Opera, Michigan Opera and Florida State Opera. He teaches at the University of Toronto and the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, and is a Resident Artist of the Soulpepper Theatre Company.

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