

2013/2014  
SEASON



# AIRLINE ICARUS

Music By Brian Current | Libretto By Anton Piatigorsky

Produced By Maniac Star

JUNE 3-8, 2014

ADA SLAIGHT HALL, DANIELS SPECTRUM

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## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Of all the performing arts, it is the production of opera and music theatre that most takes on a life of its own. *Airline Icarus* is a case in point: written in 2001, its first fully-staged production has taken nearly 13 years to come to fruition!

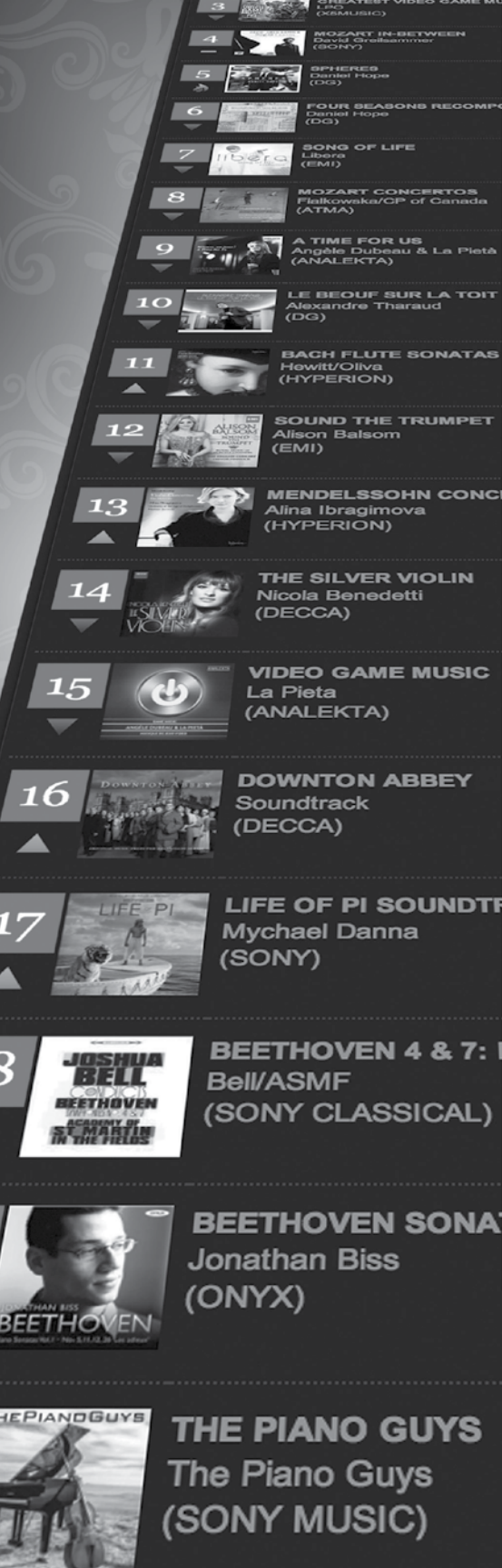
Soundstreams' engagement with the work goes back a full decade to when I attended the first public workshop of *Airline Icarus* in Vancouver. It's a work whose very musical and dramatic core is constantly in a state of flux, like airline flight itself. While at times we can be easily beguiled by its seeming peace and quiet, there is also something deeply unsettling about it that goes way beyond one's own fears of flying. *Airline Icarus'* music and text constantly radiate this sense of restless energy, at once both serene and terrifying. It is this mesmerizing paradox that has kept luring me back to this work over these 10 years.

Like other living organisms, this opera has been in a state of evolution, with the creators revising the score and text to heighten the work's inherent tensions. The most obvious change was the strengthening of the role of the chorus, reflecting and commenting upon the action, much as in a Greek tragedy.

But ultimately, even a brilliant text and score still need to be brought to life. It was a conversation several years ago with *Airline Icarus'* director Tim Albery that convinced me his vision for the work could make it come alive in an utterly clear and compelling realization. We can't ask for more in a world premiere.

Lawrence Cherney  
Artistic Director

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN MUSIC

## ABOUT SOUNDSTREAMS

### Soundstreams An International Centre for New Directions in Music

Led by Artistic Director Lawrence Cherney and Executive Director Chris Lorway, Soundstreams is a Toronto-based music presenter that commissions, develops, and showcases the work of contemporary Canadian composers and their international counterparts.

These innovative collaborations are performed by the finest artists from Canada and around the world, and are presented in an annual concert series, our monthly Salon 21 series at The Gardiner Museum, in national and international tours, and through a variety of education and outreach activities. To mark our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary season in 2012/13, Soundstreams launched SoundMakers, an innovative website and iPad app that invites music lovers to explore Soundstreams' commissioned works, create new works of their own, and share them with the online community.

Over the past three decades, Soundstreams commissions have added more than 150 works to the musical repertoire worldwide, reflecting a diverse variety of genres and cultural traditions. Soundstreams has also presented a number of festivals and conferences such as the Northern Encounters Festival, University Voices, Toronto Fanfare Project, and the Cool Drumming percussion festival and conference, as well award-winning operas including Thomson Highway and Melissa Hui's Cree opera *Pimootewin: The Journey* and R. Murray Schafer's site-specific opera *The Children's Crusade*.

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# AIRLINE ICARUS

Music By Brian Current | Libretto By Anton Piatigorsky  
Produced By Maniac Star



June 3-8, 2014  
Ada Slaight Hall, Daniels Spectrum

## CAST

Ad Executive	Vania Chan*
Worker/Pilot	Alexander Dobson*
Business Man	Geoffrey Sirett*
Flight Attendant	Krisztina Szabó*
Scholar	Graham Thomson*

## CHORUS

Jennifer Taverner, soprano*	Larissa Koniuk, soprano
Dawn Bailey, soprano*	Sean Clark, tenor*
Zorana Sadiq, soprano*	David Roth, bass*

## CREATIVE

Director	Tim Albery*
Music Director	Brian Current
Set & Costume Design	Teresa Przybylski
Lighting Design	Kimberly Purtell
Stage Manager	Kristin McCollum*
Production Manager	Patrick Lavender
Sound Design and Sound Engineer	Tye Hunt Fitzgerald
Technical Director	Nick Rose
Head Carpenter	Ryan Wilson
Head of Wardrobe	Marlee Bygate
Head of Props	Vanessa Janiszewski
Apprentice Stage Manager	Adriana Dimitri
Assistant Rehearsal Conductor	Anastasia Tchernikova
Vocal Coach/ Rehearsal Pianist	Timothy Cheung
Co-Head Electricians	Pip Bradford & Josh McGill
House Technician	Dave DeGrow
Daniels Spectrum TD	Robert Gibbons
Front of House Manager	Mark Crawford
Box Office	Royal Conservatory of Music

## ORCHESTRA

Leslie Newman, flute	Bryan Holt, cello
Anthony Thompson, clarinet	Timothy Cheung, piano
Stephen Sitarski, violin I	Ryan Scott, percussion I
Véronique Mathieu, violin II	Haruka Fujii, percussion II
Douglas Perry, viola	

## RUNNING TIME

60 minutes, no intermission

\*appears with the permission of Canadian Actor's Equity Association

# PROGRAM NOTE

By David Jaeger



*Airline Icarus* was commissioned by a small Vancouver opera company, Opera Breve, in 2001. Soundstreams' Artistic Director, Lawrence Cherney, was among those who witnessed the project's first public workshop. The untimely death of Opera Breve's co-founder John Juliani in 2003 cut short the company's plans to develop the work. Lawrence and Soundstreams continued to support the development of *Airline Icarus* and in 2006, audiences heard a sizable sample of this emerging opera by composer Brian Current and librettist Anton Piatigorsky in the Glenn Gould Studio. A 30-minute excerpt was presented as part of the concert series "Encounters," which Soundstreams produced in association with CBC Radio. The 2006 recording and broadcast of this performance helped to support the continued development of the work, and we're now able to experience the completed opera in its first full production.

Current and Piatigorsky have written, "*Airline Icarus* is about the intersecting thoughts of passengers aboard a commercial airplane. It explores the themes of hubris mixed with technology, the forced intimacy of strangers and flying too close to the sun. Over the course of the work, the plane becomes brighter and eventually vanishes." Their collaboration had begun simply enough. Current says that, while discussing air disasters, "Anton told me that

"All the wide sky  
Was there to tempt him  
As he steered himself towards heaven,  
As the heat of sun struck his back  
And where his wings were joined  
Sweet-smelling fluid  
Ran hot that once was wax."

"Where are you, Icarus?"  
"Damn this art.  
This wretched cleverness."

-Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

he had just written a poem about the absurd little society we often take for granted aboard commercial flights and the unsettling mixture of hubris and technology: we'll make small talk and watch movies while inches outside the window is a glorious cloudscape or freezing certain-death." Piatigorsky later proposed the Icarus myth—Dedalus, the inventor-father builds wax wings that his son eagerly dons and takes flight, but who then flies too close to the heat of the sun and tumbles to his demise—as the ideal metaphor for what they would try to express with the opera.

In the opera itself, the main characters each have their individual flight dreams, as well as

longings and fears. As the flight takes off for Cleveland, the interpersonal dynamics of the three passengers and the Flight Attendant are exposed—the Flight Attendant desires the Business Man, the Business Man desires the Ad Exec, the Ad Exec longs for someone unknown while she talks to the Scholar about Icarus. Turbulent desires grow too strong. The plane releases and cracks, but the Pilot, in a state of bliss, saves the plane from terror and sadness.

This first full production of *Airline Icarus* brings together a creative team lead by director Tim Albery, who suggested the treatment while directing another recent Soundstreams production, *The Children's Crusade* (R. Murray Schafer). Albery points out that, whereas a majority of new operas are adaptations of existing stories, *Airline Icarus* is a true original collaboration, with two award-winning artists working closely together to write the work, and then collaborating with the design and production team to bring it to completion. Albery has created a unique theatrical experience, together with set and costume designer Teresa Przybylski, who has a long association with Soundstreams, and with lighting designer Kimberley Purtell. He says, "This is like an 'Indie Opera' and it seems to me that that has to be the future of the way opera goes."

In the notes for the upcoming release on NAXOS Records, Current says that, "Icarus disappears in much the same way that people involved in airline tragedies disappear, and the way astronauts of the Space Shuttle Columbia disappeared in a blaze of light over Texas." He notes that the cries of Icarus' father, Dedalus, "... are heartbreaking, not so much because Icarus has crashed and died, but more that he knows that we are doomed to keep building things—airplanes, computers,

opera—in an endless cycle of trial and error that sometimes leads to disastrous consequences."

## "SOUNDSTREAMS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LAWRENCE CHERNEY WAS AMONG THOSE WHO WITNESSED THE PROJECT'S FIRST PUBLIC WORKSHOP"

The opera plays on these universal themes with a cast of five characters, a chorus of six, and a nine-member instrumental ensemble, which reflects the modest scale suggested by the original commission. But the innovative staging by Albery and his creative team compels us to consider how we would each interpret the messages in the story. In Current's words, "Like Dedalus, we might curse this sorry state, or we can rejoice in the thrill of our power to create wonderful things, as soaring Icarus must have thought before the moment he disappeared." Albery says that, "There is an empathy, a shared understanding that we all live in terror, and that somehow we have to help each other through it towards whatever this future is going to be."

*David Jaeger is a composer, producer and broadcaster based in Toronto. He was the creator & Executive Producer of the long-running CBC Radio Two contemporary music series, Two New Hours.*

### SPECIAL THANKS:

Dedicated to the memory of John Juliani.  
Obsidian Theatre | Necessary Angel Theatre Company | Alanna Julian

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



Vania Chan  
Ad Executive

Lyric Coloratura Soprano Vania Chan premiered the role of the Light Moon in "The Lesson of Da Ji" (Toronto Masque Theatre), and most recently the soprano role in "Venom of Love" (Little Pear Garden Collective) both by composer Alice Ho. She performed the role of Madame Silverklang in Mozart's "The Impresario," the goddess Diane in Rameau's "Hippolyte et Aricie" (VOICEBOX: Opera in Concert) and Princess Mi in Lehár "The Land of Smiles" (Toronto Operetta Theatre). She had her Carnegie Hall debut in Weill Recital Hall, winning first prize in the Barry Alexander International Competition, NYC. Ms. Chan received her M.M. in Classical Voice from the Manhattan School of Music, and her B.F.A. in music from York University. Upcoming: Cleopatra in Handel's "Giulio Cesare" (Halifax Summer Opera Festival).



Alexander Dobson  
Worker/Pilot

British-Canadian baritone Alexander Dobson has been praised for his musical and dramatic artistry on both opera and concert stages. Highlights include his portrayal of Wozzeck conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin, and his debut season at the Carmel Bach Festival. Alexander has sung the title role in *Don Giovanni* (Orchestre Métropolitain de Montreal), 'The Count' in *The Marriage of Figaro* (Against the Grain), 'Marcello' in *La Bohème* (Pacific Opera Victoria), 'Silvio' in *Pagliacci* (L'Opéra de Québec), 'Mercutio' in *Roméo et Juliette* (L'Opéra de Montréal), 'Harlequin' in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Calgary Opera), and 'Sonora' in *La fanciulla del West* (L'Opéra de Montreal). He made his London debut at the Linbury Theatre with Royal Opera House Covent Garden in the premiere of *The Midnight Court* by Ana Sokolovic, and is a graduate of the University of Toronto Opera Division.



Geoffrey Sirett  
Business Man

Baritone Geoffrey Sirett continues to impress musicians and audiences in debut performances in opera, concert and recital repertoire. He has performed leading roles in *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Candide*, *Il Mondo della Luna*, *Pagliacci*, *The Merry Widow*, *Ullmann's Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, *Gianni Schicchi*, and *Albert Herring*. At the Aspen Opera Theater Center, Geoffrey performed 'Il Conte' in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and 'Nick Carraway' in Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*, both broadcast nationally on NPR. Geoffrey's debut album was released in December 2011. With pianist Stephen Ralls, the album features works by Vaughan Williams, Butterworth, and Britten.

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES



Krisztina Szabó  
Flight Attendant

Ms. Szabó exemplifies today's modern singer: she is vocally versatile, possesses excellent stage prowess and paints vivid character portraits on both the opera and concert stages. She sings frequently at the COC, most recently as The Pilgrim (Saariaho's *Love from Afar*). Canadian audiences have also seen her perform with Calgary Opera, Edmonton Opera, L'Opéra de Québec, Vancouver Opera, L'Opéra de Montréal, and Opera Atelier. Krisztina Szabó's 13-14 season includes engagements with Philadelphia Opera, Vancouver Opera, Les Violons du Roy, Against the Grain Theatre, as well as an exciting début with Plural Ensemble in Spain, under the baton of renowned composer-conductor, Peter Eötvös.



Graham Thomson  
Scholar

Graham is delighted to be reprising the role of the Scholar in *Airline Icarus* for his debut with Soundstreams. Other recent notable operatic performances include: Gus Trenor in Coleman, Lemieux and Compagnie's *From the House of Mirth*; Fenton in Verdi's *Falstaff* (Highland Opera); Fileno in *La Fedelta Premiata* (Opera In Concert); Lenski in *Eugene Onegin* (Chai Opera); Nemorino in *Elisir d'Amore* (Jeunesses Musicales); Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera Lyra Ottawa); Pedrillo in *Entführung aus dem Serail* (Opera Nova Scotia); and as Tenor 1 in *Seven Deadly Sins* (Against the Grain Theatre). Concert highlights include singing as the Evangelist in *St. Matthew Passion*; and soloist in the *Messiahs* of the Highlands Festival Singers, Confederation Singers, Elmer Iseler Singers, Guelph Chamber Choir, Pax Christi Chorale, and Peterborough Singers.



Dawn Bailey  
Soprano

Soprano Dawn Bailey is a versatile performer, recognized for her engaging performances in a wide variety of vocal styles. Dawn is equally at ease on the concert and operatic stages, moving fluidly from chamber music to opera, oratorio, and art song. Especially sought after for her imaginative interpretations of music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, she has appeared with some of Canada's leading early music ensembles, including Tafelmusik, the Toronto Consort, Ensemble Caprice, Les Violons du Roy, the Theatre of Early Music, and le Studio de musique ancienne de Montreal. Dawn appears on recordings with the Toronto Consort, Ensemble Caprice, Seraphina, the Theatre of Early Music, and Vivavoce.



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## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

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Sean Clark  
Tenor

A graduate of the Opera Diploma program at the University of Toronto, Sean holds an Undergraduate degree from Ithaca College and a Masters degree from Arizona State University. Sean's operatic repertoire spans a broad range of roles, including Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Male Chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Remendado (*Carmen*) King Kaspar (*Amahl and the Night Visitors*), Chevalier de la Force (*Dialogues of the Carmelites*), Lurcanio (*Ariodante*) and Alfred (*Die Fledermaus*). Other credits include: the Canadian premiere of Doreen Rao's new arrangement of *Bernstein's Mass*; Lance Horne's one-man opera *The Tell-Tale Heart* (Luminato) and Rufus Wainwright's *Prima Donna* (Luminato). Sean recently returned to Toronto for his fourth season with the Canadian Opera Company after two seasons as a member of the chorus of the Metropolitan Opera.



Larissa Koniuk  
Soprano

Soprano Larissa Koniuk is a singer and actor whose artistic concentration is in the creation and collaboration of new opera works. Larissa is the founder and artistic director of the Bicycle Opera Project, producing and performing contemporary opera in venues across Ontario. Larissa has performed in many premiere performances, including *Thin Straight Lines* by Anna Höstman, Adam Scime's *Images of John A Wilson*, *The Handless Maiden* by Wende Bartley, *Like an Old Tale* by Juliet Palmer, and John Beckwith's *Taptoo!* with Toronto Operetta Theatre. Larissa's current season includes engagements with Tapestry, Open Ears, FAWN, and the Westben, Stratford and Toronto Summer Music festivals.



David Roth  
Bass

A graduate of the vocal performance programme at the University of Toronto, baritone David Roth has sung in Canada, the U.S., The United Kingdom, and Germany as both soloist and chamber musician with such organizations as the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, and the Toronto Masque Theatre. Some of David's operatic roles include Polyphemus in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* at the Toronto Fringe festival, Olin Blicht in Floyd's *Susannah*, Lindorff and Dr. Miracle in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* at the Halifax Summer Opera workshop, Priest of Jupiter in Handel's *Hercules* with Tafelmusik and Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Lyric opera studio Weimar. He has recently appeared in recital with the Aldeburgh connection at the Bayfield Festival of Song and in concert with I Furioli.

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## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

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Zorana Sadiq  
Soprano

Soprano Zorana Sadiq has performed extensively in Canada and the U.S. Recent performances include: *Sultans of the Street* (Young People's Theatre), *Dido and Aeneas: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Remix* (Soulpepper Global Cabaret), *Savitri and Sam* (Canadian Rep Theatre), *Tout Comme Elle* (Necessary Angel Theatre), *The Bandit Queen*, *Vocalissimus* (Boston Musica Viva), *Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation* (Calgary Philharmonic/One Yellow Rabbit), *Vier Letzte Lieder* (Orchestra Toronto), *Mulroney: The Opera*, *Burnt Toast*, (Rhombus Media), *Trudeau: Long Path, Shining March* (New World Stage Festival). This season, Zorana shares the recital stage with accordionist Joe Macerollo and pianist Peter Tiefenbach in a re-imagining of works by Kate Bush, Prince and Radiohead.



Jennifer Taverner  
Soprano

In high demand as a concert soloist, highlights of Jennifer's 2013-2014 season include *Bach's Mass in B minor* with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, *Fauré Requiem* and *Messiah* with the Bach Elgar Choir, Finzi's *In terra pax* with Hamilton Philharmonic, Dvorák's *Te Deum* with the Huronia Symphony, and as a guest recitalist with the Off Centre Salon. Operatic credits include Fiordiligi (*Così fan Tutte*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Female Chorus (*Rape of Lucretia*), and Noemie (*Cendrillon*). In 2012 she was a semi-finalist in the Montreal International Music Competition. Jennifer has held two fellowships at the prestigious Tanglewood Music Center, and is a graduate of the Glenn Gould School.

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## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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Tim Albery  
Director

Tim has directed opera throughout Europe and North America, including: *Gotterdammerung*, *War and Peace*, *Aida* (Canadian Opera Company); *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Metropolitan Opera); *Cherubin*, *Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser* (Royal Opera House); *Peter Grimes*, *Billy Budd*, *War and Peace*, *Boris Godunov* (English National Opera); *The Ring Cycle*, *The Trojans* (Scottish Opera); *Midsummer Marriage*, *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, *Giulio Cesare*, *King Croesus*, *Don Carlos*, *Otello* (Opera North); *Beatrice and Benedict*, *Magic Flute*, *Arabella* (Santa Fe Opera); *La Wally*, *Beatrice and Benedict* (Netherlands Opera); *Boccanegra*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Peter Grimes* (Bayerische Staatsoper).  
Musicals include: *One Touch of Venus* (Opera North) and *Passion* (Minnesota Opera).  
Theatre includes: *Berenice*

(National Theatre); *Wallenstein* (Royal Shakespeare Company); *Attempts on her Life* (Royal Court). Site-specific productions include: *The Children's Crusade* (Soundstreams); *Grimes on the Beach* (Aldeburgh Festival). Recent awards include: *Tannhäuser*, ROH (Royal Philharmonic Society); *Grimes on the Beach*, Aldeburgh Festival (International Opera Awards). Upcoming productions include: *Poppea* (Opera North); *La Finta Giardiniera*, *Capriccio* (Santa Fe); *Tannhäuser* (Chicago Lyric); *Katya Kabanova* (Boston Lyric).



Brian Current  
Composer/Music Director

Brian Current studied music at McGill University and UC Berkeley. His music, lauded and broadcast in over 35 countries, has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Barlow Prize for Orchestral Music (USA), the Italian Premio Fedora for Chamber Opera and a Selected Work (under 30) at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris. Brian Current's pieces have been programmed by all major symphony orchestras in Canada and by dozens of professional orchestras, ensembles and opera companies world-wide. He is in demand as a guest conductor and regularly leads orchestral programs of contemporary music.  
[www.briancurrent.com](http://www.briancurrent.com)

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## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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Anton Piatigorsky  
Librettist

Anton Piatigorsky's plays include *Breath In Between*, *Eternal Hydra*, *The Kabbalistic Psychoanalysis of Adam R. Tzaddik*, *Mysterium Tremendum* and *The Offering*. He is the recipient of two Dora Mavor Moore awards for best new play, and the 2005 Elinore and Lou Siminovitch Protégé Award for playwrighting. His first collection of short fiction, *The Iron Bridge*, was a runner up for the Danuta Gleed Literary Award. He lives in Toronto, and presently teaches at McMaster's Arts and Science program.



Teresa Przybylski  
Set & Costume Design

Teresa received her degree in Architecture at The Technical University of Krakow and in Scenography at The Fine Art Academy, Krakow, Poland. In 1988 she established her design studio in Toronto, working in theatre, opera, dance, film and architecture. Companies she has designed for include: Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Shaw Festival, Canadian Opera Company, Opera Theatre in Saint Louis, Blyth Festival, Tarragon Theatre, Factory Theatre, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, Native Earth, Volcano Theatre, Theatre Smith-Gilmour, Canadian Stage and others. For her work in theatre, she has been awarded 5 Dora Mavor Moore Awards and she has won two Gemini Awards for her work in film and television. She teaches theatre design at York University.



Kimberly Purtell  
Lighting Design

Kimberly is a Toronto-based lighting designer for theatre, dance and opera. Her designs have been critically acclaimed both on the national and international stage. They have been seen across Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Prague, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Russia. She has designed for Pacific Opera Victoria, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Philadelphia, Canadian Stage Company, Stratford Festival, Soulpepper Theatre, Buddies in Bad Times, Necessary Angel, Tapestry New Opera, and many others. Kimberly is the recipient of three Dora Mavor Moore Awards and 20 nominations for outstanding Lighting Design, and was the 2005 recipient of the Pauline McGibbon Award.



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## CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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Kristin McCollum  
Stage Manager



Patrick Lavender  
Production Manager

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Stage Management credits include *Annie*, *Cinderella*, *Seussical* and *A Year With Frog & Toad* (YPT), *Ben Heppner in Recital*, *The Brothers Grimm* and *Hansel and Gretel* (COC). ASM credits include *Tout Comme Elle* (Necessary Angel/Luminato), *Miss Saigon* (PCL0/Dancap), *Princess and the Handmaiden* (YPT), and eleven seasons with the Canadian Opera Company including *Roberto Devereux*, *Peter Grimes*, *Il Trovatore*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *The Nightingale* and *Other Short Fables*, *War & Peace*, and *Die Walküre* as part of Wagner's Ring Cycle.

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Patrick is honored to be working with such a talented ensemble on his first production with Soundstreams and Maniac Star. Patrick works as a production manager for Necessary Angel Theatre Company, Volcano Theatre, Obsidian Theatre, and Acting Up Stage Company. Patrick also works as a lighting and set designer with small but dedicated Toronto theatre companies. His recent work includes; *Birth of Frankenstein* (Litmus Theatre), *Late Company* (Suburban Beast and surface/underground theatre), *When the World Was Green* (surface/underground theatre), *Dying City* (surface/underground theatre), and *Matchbox Macbeth* (Litmus Theatre). Upcoming project: June 2014, design collaborator on a Bluemouth/Necessary Angel, site specific, workshop production at Gibraltar Point on Toronto Island.



## ARTIST Q&A KRISZTINA SZABÓ

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Hungarian-Canadian mezzo-soprano Kristztina Szabó has become highly sought after in both North America and Europe as an artist of supreme musicianship and stagecraft. Soundstreams is thrilled to be working with Kristztina for the first time on *Airline Icarus*, where she is creating the role of the Flight Attendant. We chatted with her via email in May to find out how she got started, some of her favourite roles, and how to cope with frequent flying on an opera singer's schedule!

**Soundstreams: When did you first know you wanted to be an opera singer?**

**Kristztina Szabó:** Becoming an opera singer was not a sudden revelation, but more of a gradual discovery. I think I didn't realize that I wanted to be an opera singer until I was already on the path to doing it! In fourth year university, I got the lead part in Vaughan-Williams' *Riders to the Sea* and it made me realize that I thrived being on stage. It was enough to make me re-think being an Education major and start to pursue a degree in performance. And somehow, everything fell into place.

**SS: What have two of your favourite roles been, and why?**

**KS:** It's so hard to choose! I love every role I do... it's so much fun to inhabit someone else's skin, to say (well.. sing!) and do things

you would not get away with in real life. But if I had to pick, off the top of my head, I loved being the very saucy Musetta because she is just so full of life and spirit... she is passionate and over the top, but she also shows her heart and vulnerability. And she has men wrapped around her little finger... so that's obviously fun to play. And I loved playing the Pilgrim in Saariaho's *L'amour de Loin*. The music was amazing and the aria in particular was one of the most beautiful and emotionally satisfying things to sing.

**SS: How is working on a brand new opera different than working on a classic? Which do you prefer?**

**KS:** Working on a brand new opera and a classic don't really differ that much in terms of how you approach the roles. Of course, musically it can be very different, and each presents certain challenges. I love to be able to do both, actually. I do love doing brand new opera because I get the unique experience of being one of the first, if not the first, person to delve into that role, that music, create that character. There are not a zillion recordings of other people singing it, so you can't be compared to how so-and-so sang it. I love that freedom. And what can I say? I love new opera because I like the challenge of new music!

**SS: As an opera singer, you need to fly all over the world. How do you feel about flying and what are your tips for making air travel as painless as possible?**

**KS:** I am probably the worst flyer ever. And the irony that I have a career where I have to fly constantly is not lost on me! On the one hand, I have the usual crazy opera singer concerns about getting sick when I get on a plane (and that one seems to have come true on pretty much every flight I have been on recently). But, to top it off, I can't eat airplane food because it makes me nauseous, and after some disastrous flights (one where I had to be wheeled off the plane in a wheelchair because I hadn't eaten a bite for an overseas flight and was too weak to walk off the plane), I always pack snacks and/or a lunch. As well as problems with motion sickness, I also get nervous when turbulence hits (visions of plunging into shark infested waters is one of my biggest nightmares). As

for making air travel as painless as possible ... well, I would say pack snacks, make sure you have everything and anything handy that makes you feel comfortable and relaxed: headphones, music, neck pillow, drugs! And good luck!

**SS: If you could go back and give your just starting out self a few words of advice, what would they be?**

**KS:** Take more languages, have more fun, don't stress out so much.

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