

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



**Laurier Faculty of Music presents world-renowned *Opera Excerpts***  
*Evening performances showcase Laurier's up and coming Canadian opera talent*

**For Immediate Release**

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WATERLOO – The local community can sample selections from five world-renowned operas as members of Wilfrid Laurier University's Faculty of Music present *Opera Excerpts*. The event, designed to showcase the up-and-coming Canadian talent in Laurier's opera program, will offer a selection of staged operas on November 24 and 25 in the Theatre Auditorium.

Under the musical direction of Leslie De'Ath and Beth Ann De Sousa, with stage direction by Graham Cozzubbo and choreography by Laurier opera student Andrea Wingelaar, the excerpts were chosen with the specific cast of Laurier students in mind. *Louise* and *Pique Dame (The Queen of Spades)* are appropriate for a largely female cast. *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Castaway* and *The Crucible* also showcase the ensemble's strengths.

"The evening is a chance to experience a diverse and exciting musical repertoire, and the talents of young singers who will be part of the next generation of Canadian artists in the opera and music community," Cozzubbo says. "We're featuring a variety of operas on the program, including Gustave Charpentier's *Louise* which first premiered exactly 100 years ago."

The five operas on the program include both contemporary and traditional elements.

- *Louise*, by Gustave Charpentier, is a grand opera with realism, socialist overtones and a largely female cast. Cozzubbo explains, "it was a hit in its day, is still relevant and contains unforgettable music."

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- *Pique Dame (The Queen of Spades)*, by Piotr Tchaikovsky, is the story of a girl torn between maintaining her place in high-society Russia and letting herself be taken away by her one true love, who seems more consumed with a gambling problem than with his love for her.
- *The Turn of the Screw*, by Benjamin Britten, is based on a story by Henry James and illustrates various levels of the corruption of innocence. When ghosts possess the two children, Miles and Flora, the new governess tries desperately to save them from themselves.
- *The Castaway*, by Lennox Berkeley, is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century opera based on Homer's *Odyssey*. This excerpt is part of Odysseus's journey. Odysseus is shipwrecked after being banned for blinding Poseidon's son.
- *The Crucible*, by Robert Ward, centers on the notorious 1692 Salem witch trials and is based on the play by Arthur Miller. Both the play and the opera demonstrate the power of narrow-mindedness and superstition. A small puritan town is led by a small group of creative girls in the search for witchery among them.

*Opera Excerpts* is playing on Friday, November 24 and Saturday, November 25 at 8:00 p.m. in the Theatre Auditorium at Wilfrid Laurier University. Tickets are available at the door and are \$8 for adults, \$4 for Laurier faculty and staff, seniors and students.

Members of the media are invited to attend rehearsals on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 10 p.m. For two complimentary tickets to the Friday evening performance of *Opera Excerpts*, please contact Chris Knarr at (519) 884-0710 ext. 2753.