

NEWS RELEASE



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Opera Laurier spring production an innovative double bill

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University’s Faculty of Music will present a double bill of Canadian comic operas, *Gisela in Her Bathtub* and *City Workers in Love*, March 2, 3, and 4, 2012.

In *Gisela in Her Bathtub*, a young woman reads a Norse saga while taking a bath. The story comes to life around her as she reads (and freezes whenever the phone or doorbell rings). This brief, light-hearted opera is presented as an introductory performance.

City Workers in Love, the production’s main piece, takes place on a typical Canadian construction job site, and explores the lives, foibles and fortunes of a group of city workers. Each of the three performances of the opera will feature a cameo appearance, in the role of the mayor of the city, by a different special guest: Laurier President Max Blouw, Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr or Waterloo Mayor Brenda Halloran.

“This is serious, highbrow opera, and the quality is very strong, but it’s also highly entertaining,” said Kimberly Barber, associate professor of voice and administrative coordinator of opera at Laurier. “*Gisela in Her Bathtub* is extremely funny – it’s a farce. *City Workers in Love* has some very touching moments, with an inventive score that has almost a musical theatre quality at times.”

Neil Weisensel composed the music for each of the operas. Michael Cavanagh, who directed Opera Laurier’s acclaimed 2011 production of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, wrote the librettos. The duo expanded and revised the two operas specifically for Opera Laurier.

“We were delighted with Michael’s work at Laurier on *The Magic Flute*, and it’s a great pleasure to work with him again,” said Barber, who added that the new production is in part designed to challenge its student performers and help them grow as musicians.

The production is directed by Rob Herriot, whose previous directorial credits include *The Brothers Grimm* for the Canadian Opera Company, *La Bohème* for Manitoba Opera, and *Carmen* for Arizona Opera, among others. Laurier Music Professor Leslie De’ath is conducting the chamber ensemble that will accompany each performance.

Opera Laurier is made up of voice performance students enrolled in the opera program, along with a small number of student volunteers.

Performances will take place March 2 and 3 at 8 p.m. and March 4 at 3 p.m. in the Theatre Auditorium on Laurier’s Waterloo campus. Tickets are free for Laurier students, \$5 for other students and seniors, and \$10 for adults. Contact Kathryn Ladano at kladano@wlu.ca or 519-884-0710 ext. 2150 for additional ticket information.