

Come Back to Fantasy with Pacific Opera Victoria's *The Birds*

Victoria, BC – Opening on February 22 at Victoria's Royal Theatre, Pacific Opera Victoria presents the Canadian Premiere of Walter Braunfels' *The Birds* for four performances, February 22, 24 and 28 at 7:30 pm, and February, 26 at 2:30 pm.

The second opera of the season, *The Birds* shot to acclaim in 1920, being performed over 50 times in Munich alone over the next two years, only to be suppressed by the Nazi regime and not rediscovered until 1971. The Pacific Opera production features an outstanding artistic team with Stage Director Glynis Leyshon, who is joined by Pam Johnson as Set Designer and Nancy Bryant as Costume Designer. The trio will be remembered by Pacific Opera audiences for their incredible work on Handel's *Rinaldo* in 2018.

The Birds tells the story of two disillusioned humans who journey into the realm of thrushes, wrens and ravens, where ill-advised counsel leads to a thunderous reckoning with the gods. Conducted by Pacific Opera's Founding Artistic Director, Timothy Vernon who says of the work, "Almost one hundred years old, Braunfels' operatic masterpiece has begun to come into its own only in the past two or three decades. Aristophanes was his inspiration; Braunfels departs from the Attic master in the second half of the piece; rather than a driving plot. Braunfels writes a continuous flow of irresistible melodic and sonic beauty. No denying the huge shadows of Wagner and Strauss, but it has its own personal idiom – the vocal writing is grateful in the best way, and the orchestra delivers a web of gorgeous, evocative themes and harmonies that transport us into this magical phantasmagoria."

Making her Pacific Opera stage debut in the role of Nachtigal (Nightingale) is Claire de Sévigné, recently named one of CBC's Top Young Canadian Classical Musicians. Montreal native, de Sévigné, has been praised for her, "sparkling top notes and vocal brilliance, lightness and finesse" (Neue Musikzeitung) and "remarkable intelligence of vocalization as well as of legato" (Opera Forum). She was recently nominated for a Classical Album of the Year JUNO award for her Naxos album of Vivaldi Cantatas with Kevin Mallon and the Aradia Ensemble.

Canadian Tenor Adrian Kramer takes on the role of Hoffegut (Good Hope), in his Pacific Opera debut. He has earned critical praise in recent seasons with companies throughout North America for his vocal appeal and strong theatrical engagement. Patrick Dillo wrote in Opera Canada, "Kramer showed both baritone heft and tenorial ring, reminding me a bit of a Met stalwart of a bygone era, James McCracken-- Normanno in the mid 1950s, Otello a decade later. Who knows where Kramer's voice will take him?"

Newfoundland and Labrador native, baritone Peter Barrett, returns to Pacific Opera in the role of Rätefreund (Loyal Friend), with his first performance credit being First Shephard in Strauss' *Daphne* (2007). His 2021/22 appearances included Canadian Opera Company's digital production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Marcello in *La bohème* for Edmonton Opera and the world premiere of Nicole Lizée's *RUR A Torrent of Light* with Toronto's Tapestry Opera.

Other cast members include baritone Justin Welsh as Hoopoe, baritone Kyle Albertson as Prometheus, soprano Jacqueline Woodley as Wren and soprano Rebecca Cuddy as Thrush. The production features 32 local singers in the Pacific Opera Chorus.

Tickets for single performances start at \$29, with two-show subscriptions starting at \$50. To keep Pacific Opera accessible to students, families and community organizations, Community Preview tickets are available for \$15. For more information about the 2022/23 season including tickets, visit: [2022/23 Season Information and Tickets](#)

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