



Media Release  
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## **Pacific Opera Victoria Presents Britten's *The Turn of the Screw***

Victoria, BC – Opening on October 22 at Victoria's Royal Theatre, Pacific Opera Victoria presents *The Turn of the Screw*, a psychological thriller where innocence meets the unknown. Based on the novella by Henry James, Benjamin Britten's eerie and chilling chamber opera will grace the stage of the Royal Theatre for four performances, October 22, 24, and 28 at 7:30 pm, and October 26 at 2:30 pm.

"Seeing *The Turn of the Screw* is a must for anyone who loves psychological thrillers and powerful music. Benjamin Britten's opera is a haunting ghost story but like all good stories its complexity doesn't stop there, it also drives home the power and importance of our perceptions. How we perceive our reality plays a vital role in our understanding of ourselves and our place within society. In our modern world, full of screens and technology, the power and weight of our individual perceptions bear increasing scrutiny. What do we know to be true, and what do we simply perceive as truth? I believe that great opera should not only transport us, but also resonate a part of our modern world back to us, creating reflection, which is an essential element of this piece," says Pacific Opera Artistic Director Brenna Corner.

Thanks to Britten's brilliantly taut twelve-note theme and variations, *The Turn of the Screw* builds unrelenting tension with hypnotic motifs, ghostly beauty, and disquieting calm. Each scene draws the audience deeper into a spiral of suspicion, desire, and dread, where past traumas bleed into the present and the line between danger and safety dissolves. With music that chills and seduces, and a libretto that dances between reality and illusion, Britten creates a gothic landscape of repressed emotion, buried secrets, and uncanny innocence.

Pacific Opera's production of *The Turn of the Screw*, features a Canadian cast; with soprano Kirsten MacKinnon making her Pacific Opera debut in the role of The Governess. She was described by Opera UK as a "heroine [with] poise, expressive singing, excellent vocalism, and a dark and full tone". She recently, sang Christine in *La Reine-garçon* with Canadian Opera Company, as well as Contessa in *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Opera Regio di Torino.

Pacific Opera favourite, tenor Isaiah Bell, plays Peter Quint. Bell is remembered by Victoria and Canadian audiences for his 2023 solo show *The Book of My Shames*. Bell's portrayal of Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River* earned this rave in The New York Times: "Tenor Isaiah Bell gives a performance of haunting beauty, ideally depicting emotional distraction with ultimate economy and glowing vocal skill.... he has only to lower his eyelids or tip his head for it to pierce the heart."

Two young British Columbia performers take on the roles of the children, Miles and Flora. Victoria-born soprano Mars Young makes their Pacific Opera Victoria debut as Miles, they are a classically trained singer who has been heavily involved in local theatre productions at both the Kaleidoscope Performing Arts Studio and Claremont Secondary School. Vancouver resident, Jake Apricity Hetherington, who charmed audiences in the title role of last season's *The Little Prince*, portrays Flora, Miles' younger sister.



The two act, two-hour production features an outstanding artistic team lead by stage director Michael Shamata. Shamata returns to Pacific Opera, having previously directed *La bohème* and the world premiere of *Mary's Wedding* in 2011. An award-winning director, he is currently in his 19<sup>th</sup> and final season as Artistic Director of the Belfry Theatre. *The Turn of the Screw* is conducted by Pacific Opera Principal Conductor, Giuseppe Pietraroia. Set and costume designer Shawn Kerwin is making a return to Pacific Opera, her previous productions include; *The Barber of Seville*, *Eugene Onegin*, *La Cenerentola*, and *Trovatore*. Leigh Ann Vardy also returns to Pacific Opera as Lighting Designer.

Tickets for single performances to the Royal Theatre shows start at \$35. To keep Pacific Opera accessible, Community Preview tickets are available to students and community organizations for \$15. For more information about the 2025/26 season including tickets, visit: [Pacific Opera 2025/26 season](#).

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Media enquiries: Sandra Hudson 250-216-1380 [sandra@sandrahudsoncomm.com](mailto:sandra@sandrahudsoncomm.com)