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CONTACT: Geoffrey Sirett
416 554 7517

THE BICYCLE OPERA PROJECT ANNOUNCES 2015 SEASON: 21 C FESTIVAL, PEDALLING THE CAPE BRETON HILLS, AND *SHADOW BOX*

Toronto, ON - The Bicycle Opera Project announces its ambitious summer season, which includes RCM's 21C Festival, a residency project in Cape Breton, an east coast tour, and new tour locations in Ontario.

RCM'S 21C MUSIC FESTIVAL

Bicycle Opera launches its season at **RCM'S 21C FESTIVAL** where the troupe will be offering a sneak peek into the summer touring production *shadow box*, May 21st at 10 pm in RCM's Mazzoleni Hall.

Tenor **Graham Thomson** and baritone **Alexander Dobson** will join returning members **Larissa Koniuk** (soprano), **Stephanie Tritchew** (mezzo soprano) and **Wesley Shen** (music director/piano). Bicycle Opera also welcomes violinist **Ilana Waniuk**, cellist **Erika Nielsen**, and projection artist/designer **Sonja Rainey**, along with returning stage director **Liza Balkan**.

May 21st offers a glimpse into scenes in development for the summer touring production *shadow box*:

The Blind Woman by James Rolfe and David Yee; *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Cecilia Livingston and Nicolas Billon; *(What rhymes with) Azimuth?* by Ivan Barbotin and Liza Balkan; "The Dreaming Duet" from *The Bells of Baddeck* (world premiere) by Dean Burry and Lorna MacDonald; and back by popular demand: *Bianchi: A five-minute bicycle opera* by Tobin Stokes.

This year the Bicycle Opera Project also engages in our first commissioned work: *Ride of the Bicycle Bells* by Christopher Thornborrow. This Toronto-based composer, BOP friend, and cycling enthusiast mashes together the operatic overture with a special bike-y twist - it's scored for 11 bicycle bells and one bike horn!

EAST COAST RESIDENCY

The Bicycle Opera Project is embarking on an **EAST COAST RESIDENCY PROJECT** to premiere *The Bells of Baddeck*, by Dean Burry and Lorna MacDonald. Here, in a newly created music drama, is the story of the inventor Alexander Graham Bell and his wife Mabel who came to Cape Breton and fell in love with its people, music, and Gaelic charm.

Geoffrey Sirett, co-producer - "When Lorna approached us about this project we jumped on the chance to collaborate with this east-coast power team. In addition to participating in this exciting world premiere, it is the perfect opportunity BOP has been looking for to pedal our way into a new province."

SHADOW BOX AND THE 2015 TOUR

This year Bicycle Opera is thrilled to unveil our 2015 touring production: **shadow box**.

shadow box is a collection of eight contemporary opera scenes, but with one vision – exploring our mind’s relationship to memory: what we treasure dearly and what haunts us in turn. Audiences should expect something very different from **shadow box**; a single narrative experience.

Along with returning stage director Liza Balkan, Bicycle Opera welcomes set designer and live projection artist Sonja Rainey. Known for her tactile and experiential approach, Sonja will be using real-time projection art to explore the shadows that live beyond the surface.

Larissa Koniuk, artistic director – *“shadow box is a departure for the company. We are adding both a strong visual story telling element and a narrative through-line. It’s an exciting step for the company as we look ahead to full length works in upcoming seasons.”*

The repertoire for **shadow box** will consist of:

The Yellow Wallpaper by Cecilia Livingston and Nicolas Billon, **The Blind Woman** by James Rolfe and David Yee, **The Auction** by John Burge and Eugene Benson, **Dreaming Duet** from **The Bells of Baddeck** by Dean Burry and Lorna MacDonald; **Submission** by Dean Burry and David Yee; **What time is it now?** By Anna Höstman and P.K. Page, **Our Lady of Esquimalt Road** by Leila Lustig and Geoff Hargreaves, **Bianchi: a five-minute bicycle opera** by Tobin Stokes, and the company’s first commission: a mini overture for 11 bicycle bells and one bike horn: **Ride of the Bicycle Bells** by Chris Thornborrow.

The Bicycle Opera Project is the world’s only pedal-powered opera company. Founded in 2012 to present high-quality and accessible opera in unique venues via the bicycle, the company presents a car-free alternative to touring.

The project features Canada’s emerging classical music stars: Larissa Koniuk, soprano; Stephanie Tritchew, mezzo; Christopher Enns, tenor; Geoffrey Sirett, baritone; Wesley Shen, piano; Ilana Waniuk, violin; Erika Nielsen, cello, as well as Sonja Rainey, set designer/projectionist, and Liza Balkan, stage director.

Liza Balkan, stage director - *“In many ways, I think of them as operatic improvisers- a rarity! I adore working with them as a stage director. They combine glorious musicianship with an impressive ability to embrace the material - and each and every new venue - with joy, truth, freedom and ingenuity. I applaud their desire to forward Canadian repertoire this way. And I haven't even mentioned the biking!”*

Catch Bicycle Opera this season:

- [21C Festival](#): May 21st, 10 pm, Mazzoleni Hall, Toronto
- Residency with the [Bells of Baddeck](#): July 3rd – August 2nd, Baddeck, Cape Breton, NS
- [Shadow box](#) tours the East Coast: August 3rd – 11th and Ontario: August 14 Sept 6th

CONTACT: Geoffrey Sirett

bicycleopera@gmail.com | bicycleopera.com | 416 554 7517