

# A Tale of Two Cities

Arthur Benjamin

Conductor Sandra Horst  
Director Kelly Robinson

The Faculty of Music Opera  
Division is grateful for the support  
of The Azrieli Foundation Opera  
Visiting Artist Program.

Thursday, March 9 | 7:30pm  
Friday, March 10 | 7:30pm  
Saturday, March 11 | 7:30pm  
Sunday, March 12 | 2:30pm



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MUSIC

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

## Director's Note:

A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens' epic historical drama, first appeared in print in Dickens' own weekly periodical, All the Year Round. The genesis of the novel came earlier when Dickens, who started out as an actor before a failed audition turned him first to journalism, then to novels, agreed to take a role in the production of his protégé Wilkie Collins' early play, "Frozen Deep". Dickens had been involved closely as a mentor with the writing of the play, a melodrama about the doomed Franklin expedition.

The plot concerns a Captain of one of Franklin's ships, the role taken by Dickens, who sacrifices his own life, so that his rival could return to the woman they both love. By all accounts, Dickens was a remarkable success in the part. Queen Victoria made a note in her journal after seeing a performance, about his success in touching the monarch during his death scene.

Dickens loved the themes of redemption and rebirth, love, and violence in the Collins play, and looked for a way to use the theme himself. He had a plot, but not yet a story. He needed a landscape of danger, violence, and bloodshed to give the intimate plot the stakes that were needed to grab his audience with feats of derring-do, acts of courage and of heroism.

It was Dickens' master stroke to seize upon Thomas Carlyle's great work of scholarship, "The French Revolution" published in 1837, and which continued its popularity in an England still bewildered and horrified by what had happened to their neighbour, France. He and Carlyle were friends, and he admired the book greatly. It suited his passion for social activism and fed his strong belief that inequity in society led to disruption, and that great inequity led to violent upheaval. And now his plot had a powerful background and context for a story about great love and the ultimate sacrifice.

When Arthur Benjamin took up the story as a source for his third opera in the 1950's, he had emigrated to Canada to sit out the War, having served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the first War, and having been taken prisoner in 1918. Settling in Vancouver, he had quickly assumed a significant role in Canadian musical life, becoming Conductor of the newly formed CBC Symphony and entering a period of great and varied compositional activity. He had scored a number of films, including for Alexander Korda and Alfred Hitchcock and had composed a number of songs based on music from the Napoleonic period setting the stage for "A Tale of Two Cities".

His librettist, Cedric Cliffe shaped the vast plot of the novel down to focus on Sydney Carton and his unrequited love for Lucie Manette, herself in love with the French aristocrat known as Charles Darnay, Carton's rival. Cliffe's compression of Dickens' work left ample room for Benjamin's music to capture the passionate story of an epic triangle of love, violence, and almost unthinkable sacrifice.

It has been our pleasure and our privilege to enter the world of Dickens' imagination, filtered through the gorgeous and sweeping landscape of Arthur Benjamin's music, and the elegance of Cedric Cliffe's text. We are grateful that you chose to join us on our journey through A Tale of Two Cities.

Flag Trivia: For those interested in the histories of flags, you may notice that the Tricolore is not represented in its customary blue/white/red. The last scene of the opera (and the novel) takes place in 1790, the eve of the Reign of Terror. In 1794, apparently in a repudiation of the excesses of the Terror, the flag colours were reversed to place the colour red in its current placement. Not that the bloodshed had entirely ended in 1794 but that is another story.

-Kelly Robinson (Director & Azrieli Foundation Opera Visiting Artist 2023)

# A Tale of Two Cities

Arthur Benjamin

Libretto based on the novel by Charles Dickens by Cedric Cliffe

**Conductor:** Sandra Horst

**Director:** Kelly Robinson\*\*

**Set Designer:** Scott Reid\*\*

**Lighting Designer:** Siobhan Sleath\*\*

**Projection Designer:** Gabriel Cropley\*\*

**Costume Designers:** Andrew Nasturzio & Alessia Urbani

**Choreographer:** Kelly Robinson\*\*

**Stage Manager:** Susan Monis Brett\*

**Assistant Director:** Mabel Wonnacott

**Assistant Stage Manager:** Joy Castro

**Assistant Conductor:** Spencer Kryzanowski

**Intimacy Coach:** Lisa Stevens

**Répétiteurs:** Christine Bae, Spencer Kryzanowski

**Surtitles:** John Sharpe

The Faculty of Music Opera Division is grateful for the support of The Azrieli Foundation Opera Visiting Artist Program.

Additional support for costumes generously provided by Janet Stubbs.

## CAST

Madame Defarge  
Lucie Manette  
1<sup>st</sup> Woman  
2<sup>nd</sup> Woman  
3<sup>rd</sup> Woman  
Miss Pross  
The Young Countess  
Doctor Manette  
Charles Darnay  
Sydney Carton  
Lorry  
Defarge  
Jacques I  
Jacques II  
Jacques III  
Jacques IV  
The Marquis de Saint Evrémonde  
Gabelle (*his steward*)  
The Spy  
The Old Marquis  
Apple Seller  
Corporal

## Mar. 9/11

Cassandra Amorim  
Emily Rocha/Jordana Goddard  
Ana Isabella Castro  
Lissy Meyerowitz  
Ellita Gagner  
Nathania-Rose Chan  
Alex Sorensen  
Burak Yaman  
Benjamin Done  
James Coole-Stevenson  
Gabriel Klassen  
Christian Matta  
Luke Nofall  
Jun Lam (Wesley) Hui  
William Salinas-Crosby  
Lyndon Ladeur\*  
Gregory Dahl\*  
Bradley Christensen\*  
Rayleigh Becker  
Frank Yu  
Nathania-Rose Chan  
William Salinas-Crosby

## Mar. 10/12

Ayana Platt  
Emily Rocha  
Ana Isabella Castro  
Lissy Meyerowitz  
Ellita Gagner  
Nathania-Rose Chan  
Alex Sorensen  
Burak Yaman  
Benjamin Done  
George Theodorakopoulos  
Gabriel Klassen  
Christian Matta  
Luke Nofall  
Jun Lam (Wesley) Hui  
William Salinas-Crosby  
Lyndon Ladeur\*  
Gregory Dahl\*  
Bradley Christensen\*  
Rayleigh Becker  
Frank Yu  
Nathania-Rose Chan  
William Salinas-Crosby

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William Salinas-Crosby	Xavier Solis	Dasha Tereshchenko
Alina Tigelman	Chihiro Yasufuku	Janelle Yausif
Taline Yeremian	Frank Yu	Katherine Zimmon

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Jaedon Daly

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Jeffrey Paik  
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Toma Pena Paz Y Mino  
Ho Yin Michael Wong

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Wang Hin (Marcus) Chan  
Benjamin Kemppainen  
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Anastasia Murdocca  
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Joanne Yin  
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Erik Dubeau  
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Jacob Valcheff  
Brayden Krueger  
Matthew Magosci

### Harp

Charlene Chin

### Guitar

James Baker

### Piano/Celesta

Christine Bae

## UNDERSTUDIES

Madame Defarge	Christina Bell
Lucie Manette	Jordana Goddard
1 <sup>st</sup> Woman	Camille Labonté
2 <sup>nd</sup> Woman	Dasha Tereshchenko
3 <sup>rd</sup> Woman	Taline Yeremian
Young Countess	Leandra Dahm



## BIOGRAPHIES

**Sandra Horst** is a conductor and educator based in Toronto. In addition to making her conducting debut with the Canadian Opera Company in *Il viaggio a Reims*, she is also the Price Family Chorus Master, with repertoire spanning more than 70 operas.

As Director of Musical Studies for Opera at the University of Toronto she has conducted repertoire on the main stage ranging from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, to Gershwin's *Of Thee I Sing*, Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* and this past fall, with the first live audience in three years, a triple bill of *Hin und Zurück* (Hindemith), *Monsieur Choufleuri* (Offenbach) and *Gallantry* (Moore).

She is a guest faculty member of Open Space: Opera in the 21st Century at the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity and is a frequent Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition judge. Ms Horst served as Chorus Master and audition consultant for Opera Theatre of St Louis, Chorus Master for Edmonton Opera, and has been on the music staff of the Canadian Opera Company, Juilliard Opera Centre, Chautauqua Institute School of Singing, Boston Lyric Opera and Opera Ontario. She also currently serves as an industry mentor for Tapestry Opera's Women in Musical Leadership program.

In addition to being recognized as one of the 100 Alumni of Achievement, in 2019 she received an Honorary Doctorate in Music from Wilfrid Laurier University and holds a Masters degree in Accompaniment from New England Conservatory, Boston. An active collaborator, she has been heard in recital with Brandon Cedel, Michael Schade and Marie Berard, Erin Wall, Myles Mykkanen and Elena Tsaligova, as well as in performance on WGBH Radio in New England and CBC Radio. Recent conducting performances include *Orphée+* with Edmonton Opera and *Florence, the Lady with the Lamp* with Voicebox: Opera in Concert.



**Kelly Robinson's** career as a director, choreographer, and dramaturg, spans opera, theatre, dance, and film. He holds a law degree from York University and has been the Director of Creative Development for Toronto's Mirvish Productions for the past 27 years. He is a past board member of The Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and remains active in that organization. He is a frequent teacher of Master Classes, most recently at Guildhall SMD in London, Nissan Nativ Acting Studio, Jerusalem, and in Fontainebleau, France where he co founded a Young Artist training program.



He led the Opera Training Program at Canada's International Centre for Arts and Creativity, The Banff Centre from 2003 - 2013 and went on to lead Theatre Arts from 2008 - 2013 where he fostered an interdisciplinary approach to creation. During his tenure, he commissioned, developed, and/or incubated new works in Opera, Drama, Dance and Music Theatre from artists such as Jonathan Dove, Ricky Ian Gordon, John Estacio, Aszure Barton, Hannah Moscovitch, Daniel McIvor, Colman Domingo, Colleen Murphy, Kevin O'Day among many others, and hosted Sundance Institute's Theatre Lab in 2011, and LMDA's International Conference in 2012.

With more than 100 mainstage productions, his award-winning work as a theatre director and choreographer has been seen at, among others, The Shaftesbury Theatre (West End, London, where Theatre Record called *PEGGY SUE GOT MARRIED* the best musical of the season), Mirvish Productions, The Stratford Festival Canada, The Palace Theatre (New York), The Shaw Festival Canada, Manitoba Theatre Centre, The National Arts Centre, CanStage Toronto, and Plymouth Theatre Royal in England as well as the opera companies of Dallas, Minnesota, Portland, Utah, and Arizona, in addition to opera and theatre companies across Canada. He was dramaturg and director of Estacio and Murrell's *FILUMENA* which premiered in Calgary, filmed and broadcast by CBC, and has become Canada's most produced contemporary opera. Dramaturg and Director for premieres of *LILLIAN ALLING*, Vancouver Opera, *FROBISHER* and *THE INVENTOR*, Calgary Opera, *LUCY'S LAPSES* for Portland Opera, *SECRET GARDEN* for Trinity, London.

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Co-Heads of Wardrobe  
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Hair and Makeup Assistant  
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Sound Design  
Props Master  
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Ross Hammond  
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Meghan Specht  
Richard Miller  
Susanna Feng  
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