



A new Canadian production
of *Written On Skin*

Description

Opéra de Montréal premieres a widely acclaimed work of the 21st century

Montreal, January 8, 2020

Widely acclaimed in the world's greatest opera houses, *Written on Skin* comes to the **Opéra de Montréal** stage on January 25 in an all-new production, the work's Canadian premiere. The New York Times considers the opera's British composer, **George Benjamin**, to be "one of the most formidable composers of his generation."

"It's a real coup for the Opéra de Montréal to be able to present this first Canadian production of *Written on Skin*, an opera composed in the last decade that we believe will still be performed in the world's greatest opera houses one hundred years from now," exclaims **Patrick Corrigan**, General Director of the Opéra de Montréal. "And it's all the more significant for us to allow all of these talented Canadian artists to make their debuts in this international-calibre work," adds Corrigan.

The New York Times considers the opera's British composer, George Benjamin, to be "one of the most formidable composers of his generation."

The company's Artistic Director, **Michel Beaulac**, goes further, stating "Magnificent soprano **Magali Simard-Galdès** is perfect for the role of Agnès. Her ingenuousness and, at the same time, the strength that dwells within her make her an ideal performer for this most demanding role, which requires both astonishing virtuosity and formidable stage presence. We are also very fortunate to be welcoming two incredible Quebec artists for their Opéra de Montréal debuts: renowned designer **Philippe Dubuc**, who has created the costumes, and conductor **Nicole Paiement**, who has enjoyed a brilliant international career for many years," concludes Beaulac.

A FRAGMENTED WORLD



A chorus of angels takes us back 800 years, bringing to life the work's main characters: young Agnès, who lives under the yoke of her possessive and violent husband, the Protector. She exists in an opaque and suffocating world. But one of the angels, the Boy, leads Agnès to discover the unsuspected strengths within her.

'We are Agnès. Agnès is us. How do we free ourselves from that which stifles us?'

"Disillusioned and cynical angels relate a medieval legend that is played out in our modern society, a world that is fractured and in ruins. To illustrate this story of oppression—but also of emancipation—, past and present exist side by side, with several anachronisms underscoring the juxtaposition of the different eras," states stage director Alain Gauthier. "Olivier Landreville's apocalyptic set design reveals trestles inspired by medieval theatre, highlighting writer Martin Crimp's mise en abyme approach, and ingeniously conveying the idea of a play within a play. Also, with the use of a more confined and intimate performance space, we can shine a spotlight on the acting and focus on the characters' psychological make-up."

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"(...) The best opera written over the last twenty years." – Le Monde

"We could not suppress the vague impression of having attended the birth of a masterpiece." – Le Figaro

"One of the defining works of the 21st Century." – The Guardian

Written on Skin, opera by George Benjamin

Structure : 3 parts

Language: English with French and English surtitles

Libretto: Martin Crimp

Creation: Festival Aix-en-Provence 2012

Work commissioned by Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, De Nederlandse Opera (Amsterdam), Théâtre du Capitole (Toulouse), Royal Opera House Covent Garden (London) in collaboration with Teatro Stabile del Veneto.

Cast

Agnès: Magali Simard-Galdès, Soprano coloratura, Canada

Protector: Daniel Okulitch, Bass-baritone, Canada

Angel 1: Luigi Schifano, Countertenor, Italy

Angel 2 / Marie: Florence Bourget, Mezzo-soprano, Canada

Angel 3 / John: Jean-Michel Richer, Tenor, Canada

Conductor: Nicole Paiement, Canada

Director: Alain Gauthier, Canada

Costumes: Philippe Dubuc, Canada

Sets: Olivier Landreville

Lighting: Éric Champoux

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts



January 25, 28, 30, 2020 at 7:30 pm and February 2, 2020, at 2 pm

Tickets

Single tickets starting at \$25

Opéra de Montréal Box Office: 514-985-2258 • 1 877 385-2222 • operademontreal.com

Place des Arts Box Office: 514-842-2112 • 1 866 842-2112

LET'S TALK OPERA!

On **Sunday, January 12** at 2 pm at Victoria Hall, 4626 Sherbrooke W, there will be a discussion on ***Written on Skin*** by **George Benjamin**.

Opéra de Montreal offers a stimulating exploration of each opera of the season, featuring singers and guests. Plot, music, voices, cultural context, composer – everything you ever wanted to know!

Hosted by musicologist **Pierre Vachon**, PhD.

Presented in English by L'Opéra de Montréal.

Free event. For more information and to register go to operademontreal.com

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Well-established in Montreal, at the crossroads of North American and European culture, the **Opéra de Montréal** acts as a catalyst for the city's artistic creativity and celebrates Quebec and Canada's rich vocal heritage, showcasing opera at its most diverse and daring. From great classics of the opera repertoire and innovative new works from home and abroad, to a training program for the finest young Canadian singers and a strong commitment to the community and to education, the Opéra de Montréal offers unforgettable operatic events at which everyone is warmly received and feels welcome.



Category

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