

TORONTO, SHAW FESTIVAL & NIAGARA

Concert & Two Operas; Niagara Falls & Theatre

Thursday, May 9th through Sunday, May 12th



Toronto skyline

"Toronto now finds itself with one of the finest new opera houses anywhere." Opera

Sondra Radvanovsky: *"Her Medea cements her position as 'prima donna assoluta'... Her curtain call was met with a wild ovation."*

Bachtrack, review of the MET's Opening Night

"I strongly suspect – in fact, firmly believe – that the Shaw Festival at Canada's Niagara-on-the-Lake is the best repertory theater on the entire continent."

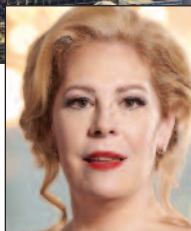
New York Magazine

The Canadian cultural capital of Toronto remains among our most popular spring destinations. In recent years we have encountered the **Canadian Opera Company's** varied repertoire including the world premiere of Rufus Wainwright's 'Hadrian', Tchaikovsky's 'Eugene Onegin', and last year's combination of 'Macbeth' and 'Tosca'. For the spring of 2024, we will return for an unmissable Canadian premiere of Cherubini's classic tragedy **Medea** (being mounted for the sensational Canadian soprano **Sondra Radvanovsky**) and Donizetti's lyric comedy, **Don Pasquale**.



Royal Ontario Museum

The **Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO)** ranks among the leading exponents of standard and contemporary instrumental works. Our **TSO Concert** in Roy Thomson Hall will be led by Music Director **Gustavo Gimeno**, featuring popular works by Brahms and Tchaikovsky.



Sondra Radvanovsky



Matthew Polenzani

Our long weekend will also take us to the acclaimed **George Bernard Shaw Festival** in the charming Victorian village of **Niagara-on-the-Lake**, with a visit to the spectacular Canadian side of **Niagara Falls**. (Our Shaw Festival performance will be announced at a later date when the program is available.)

Accommodations for **four nights** at the deluxe **Hilton Toronto**, ideally located across the street from the opera house and only a few blocks from Roy Thomson Hall. Situated in the heart of the city's commercial and entertainment district, the Hilton offers the **Tundra Room** for award-winning cuisine. There are several other restaurants within a stone's throw of the hotel: **Ruth's Chris Steak House** for prime beef and fresh seafood, **Little Anthony's** for imaginative pasta and Italian fare, and **Volos Estiatorio** for exceptional Greek dishes. The Hilton overlooks Toronto's expansive University Avenue on the corner of Richmond Street West.

Early Thursday evening, May 9th, a pre-concert Italian **dinner** at **Little Anthony's** will provide an opportunity to meet other members of the Tour.

At 7:30 pm on Thursday, our performance is the first-ever Canadian production of Luigi Cherubini's 18th century opera, **Medea**. The esteemed **Canadian Opera Company (COC)** shares the staging with the MET and Chicago's Lyric Opera which was chosen for last season's prestigious Opening Night at the MET. The COC has achieved a casting coup by re-assembling the same principals who were hailed at the MET: the riveting soprano **Sondra Radvanovsky** repeating her astonishing portrayal of the title role; tenor **Matthew Polenzani** as Jason (Medea's former lover); **Janai Brugger** as Glauce (Jason's fiancé) and **Eric Owens** as Creonte, the King of Corinth. The conductor is **Lorenzo Passerini**, and **Sir David**

McVicar is credited with both the direction and set design of the intensely brooding production. Premiered in 1797, 'Medea' remains Cherubini's grandest achievement with a richly orchestrated score replete with dramatic arias and confrontations among the iconic characters. "This operatic interpretation of the ancient Greek myth gives Medea the last word as she unleashes her rage with chilling violence against those who have wronged her." (COC). *Sung in Italian with English surtitles.*



Niagara-on-the-Lake;
Niagara Falls



Friday, May 10th (and the morning of the 12th) is left free during the day for independent sightseeing in Toronto. Of particular interest are the **Royal Ontario Museum**, Toronto's largest and most important; the **Art Gallery of Ontario**, containing the world's largest collection of the English sculptor Henry Moore; and the **McMichael Canadian Collection**, a rustic timbered gallery a few miles north of the city, displaying works by the Canadian 'Group of Seven' painters formed in 1920. The all-inclusive mall of the upscale **Eaton Center** is near our hotel; or you may wish to browse along the designer shops and boutiques of Toronto's 'uptown' **Bloor Street**.

Friday evening, we look forward to the 7:30 pm Concert by the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO)**. The TSO's Spanish Music Director **Gustavo Gimeno** will be on the podium. In only a few short years, Maestro Gimeno's imaginative programs and dynamic leadership have been consistently applauded by audiences and critics. We will hear a commissioned new work by



Julia Mermelstein, followed by Johannes Brahms' beloved *Violin Concerto* and Tchaikovsky's melodic *Symphony No. 4*. The soloist is the young German violinist **Frank Peter Zimmermann**.

Gustavo Gimeno
Four Seasons
Centre for the
Performing Arts

On Saturday, May 11th, we will discover the high thespian standards of the famed **Bernard Shaw Festival**.

While the Festival is devoted to the prolific Shaw canon, it has also achieved remarkable success with the Shakespeare canon and musical revivals ranging from George Gershwin to Stephen Sondheim, the British plays of Terence Rattigan, Somerset Maugham and Oscar Wilde, and American classics by Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. A two-hour morning drive will take us to the splendor of **Niagara Falls**, at an optimum time of year before the overcrowded summer season. Our visit to the Falls will be from the preferred Canadian side. We will then continue to the atmospheric Victorian town of



Niagara-on-the-Lake on the shores of Lake Ontario, home of the Shaw Festival, where you will have time to enjoy the boutiques and an independent lunch at one of the cafés on the main street. Following our matinee play (*TBA when the Festival program is announced*), we will return to the hotel in the early evening.



Misha Kiria

At 2:00 pm on Sunday, May 12th, our second opera by the COC will be Gaetano Donizetti's **Don Pasquale**. First performed in



Joshua Hopkins

Paris in 1843, this 'bel canto' comedy is replete with virtuoso arias, duets and ensembles in relating the subterfuge of the young lovers Norina and Ernesto as they dupe his uncle (Pasquale) into accepting their marriage.

The ingenious score (*this writer's favorite among Donizetti's operas*) alternates between lyric outpourings for the four principals and 'buffo' ensembles at the close of all three acts. The important *new production* by the French-Canadian team of director **Renaud Doucet** and designer **André Barbe** marks 'Don Pasquale's' first return to the COC in thirty years. Under conductor **Jacques Lacombe**, the international cast is headed by Georgian bass **Misha Kiria** in the title role, American/-Guatemalan soprano **Andrea Carroll** as Norina, Argentinian tenor **Santiago Ballerini** as Ernesto, and Canadian baritone **Joshua Hopkins** as Dr. Malatesta. *Sung in Italian with English surtitles.*

Sunday evening, a final **dinner** of Greek cuisine will be arranged at **Volos Estiatorio** adjacent to our hotel.

Independent departures should be on Monday morning, May 13th.

IMPORTANT: *Please be advised that you should bring your PASSPORT for entry into Canada and departure at the Toronto Airport.*

Toronto

Price per person, based on double occupancy	\$ 3,370
Single room supplement	\$ 780

Airfare NOT included.