

canadianstage³⁰ seasons

World Premiere opera *Hamlet*, composed by Brett Dean with libretto by Canadian Stage's Matthew Jocelyn, wins World Premiere of the Year at International Opera Awards

Toronto, ON – April 11, 2018 – **Canadian Stage Interim Managing Director and Executive Producer Sherrie Johnson** is thrilled to share and celebrate the news that the Glyndebourne Festival-commissioned opera *Hamlet*, composed by **Brett Dean** with libretto penned by Canadian Stage's own **Matthew Jocelyn**, this week won the **World Premiere of the Year Award** at the International Opera awards.

The winners were announced on **Monday, April 9** in a ceremony at the London Coliseum hosted by BBC Radio 3 presenter Petroc Trelawny. Winners were selected from a list of over one hundred finalists representing six continents and thirty countries, by an international jury chaired by **John Allison**, editor of *Opera* magazine and classical music critic with *The Daily Telegraph*. *"We are delighted to celebrate this recognition of Matthew's work on the international opera stage and are always tremendously proud of his accomplishments as an artist, which have enabled the creative leadership he has brought to Canadian Stage for the last nine years,"* said **Johnson**. *"It is certainly timely during our 17.18 season, which we opened with the extraordinary Life After from Britta Johnson and coinciding with The Overcoat: A Musical Tailoring, on stage now at the Bluma Appel."*

Called "one of the most eagerly anticipated premieres of the year" prior to its premiere by London's *The Telegraph*, *Hamlet* marks another significant musical project for Jocelyn, whose international reputation as a director and librettist includes many noted operatic adaptations of literary works: *Requiem for a Nun* (based on the text by William Faulkner composed by Oscar Strasnoy, Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires), or *Le bal* (based on the text by Irène Nemirovsky, composed by Oscar Strasnoy, Hamburg Staatsoper, Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, Prinzregententheater, Munich).

Vladimir Jurowski, principal conductor of the London Philharmonic, who conducted *Hamlet*, was awarded the Conductor of the Year prize at the event. *Hamlet* was commissioned towards the end of Jurowski's time as Glyndebourne's Music Director (2001 – 2013) and marked his first return to the company since completing his tenure.

Staged by director Neil Armfield, the production had its world premiere at Glyndebourne Festival 2017 (one of the world's oldest and most celebrated opera festivals) and was staged with a new cast for the Adelaide Festival this past March 2018. The production was met with great critical and industry acclaim; *The Guardian's* Erica Jeal saying, *"With a reverent but mischievous take on the text and a superb cast led by tenor Allan Clayton, this world premiere production rises to the challenge set by Shakespeare's great play."*

Canadian-born soprano Barbara Hannigan also represented the country in the world premiere presentation.

About Hamlet

To be, or not to be. This is Hamlet's dilemma, and the essence of Shakespeare's most famous and arguably greatest work, given new life in operatic form in this original Glyndebourne commission. Thoughts of murder and revenge drive Hamlet when he learns that it was his uncle Claudius who killed his father, the King of Denmark, then seized his father's crown and wife. But Hamlet's vengeance vies with the question: is suicide a morally valid deed in an unbearably painful world? Dean's colourful, energetic, witty and richly lyrical music expertly captures the modernity of Shakespeare's timeless tale, while also exploiting the traditional operatic elements of arias, ensembles and choruses. Matthew Jocelyn's libretto is pure Shakespeare, adhering to the Bard's narrative thread but abridging, reconfiguring and interweaving it into motifs that highlight the main dramatic themes: death, madness, the impossibility of certainty and the complexities of action.

About Glyndebourne

Founded in 1934 by John Christie and his opera singer wife, Audrey Mildmay, Glyndebourne is committed to presenting opera of the highest quality, commissioning new work, developing new talent and reaching new audiences. For more information: glyndebourne.com.

About Canadian Stage – celebrating 30 seasons

Founded in 1987, Canadian Stage is one of the country's leading not-for-profit contemporary performing arts companies, sharing new, innovative stage work from Canada and around the world. Led by Artistic & General Director Matthew Jocelyn, Canadian Stage produces and presents a new hybrid of multidisciplinary performance that pushes the boundaries of form and style, integrating theatre, dance, music, multimedia and more. Canadian Stage is dedicated to reinforcing the presence of Canadian art and artists within an international cultural dialogue, by acting as a home, incubator and exporter of leading Canadian and global performance. The company stages an annual season at three historic locations: the Bluma Appel Theatre; the Berkeley Street Theatre; and the High Park Amphitheatre, home to Shakespeare in High Park. Offering a range of education, artist training and community outreach programs, Canadian Stage is committed to cultivating tomorrow's artistic innovators and audiences. For more information, visit canadianstage.com.