

Stopera

Media release

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For immediate distribution

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Being Beauteous

Stopera's evocative concert of vocal chamber music for the 2006 Canberra International Chamber Music Festival

Featuring the Australian premiere of a key work by German composer Hans Werner Henze, who celebrates his 80th birthday this year

**Monday 1 May 6pm, James O. Fairfax Theatre
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra**

After a sell-out success at last year's Canberra International Chamber Music Festival with their performance of Bach's Coffee Cantata at Tilley's Café, **Stopera** returns in the 2006 Festival with a concert of beautiful vocal chamber music at the National Gallery of Australia. The unique concert program features evocative music for the female voice, in imaginative combinations with flute, harp, piano and four cellos.

The concert has been specially devised for this year's **Canberra International Chamber Music Festival** by **Stopera**, the ACT's chamber opera company, recently described in the national press as '*one of the most adventurous and stylish independent opera companies in the country.*' Since 1995, Stopera has presented more than twenty chamber opera seasons and concert series, both locally and interstate, winning eight Canberra Critics Circle Awards.

The ***Being Beauteous*** concert program features two evocative works by Australian composer and national treasure, **Peter Sculthorpe**. ***The Stars Turn*** was originally the fourth part of Sculthorpe's *Love 200*, written for rock band and orchestra in 1970, and his beautiful chamber reduction of the work for voice, cello and piano is dedicated to the composer's family.

In ***Eliza Fraser Sings***, written to text by Canberra-based writer **Barbara Blackman**, Sculthorpe has composed a remarkable and dramatic chamber work for soprano, flute and piano that gives voice to Eliza Fraser's amazing true story of shipwreck in 1836 and her survival as a white woman in an Aboriginal tribe.

Ravel's *Chansons Madécasses* for mezzo soprano, flute, cello and piano are exotic songs of love, lust and rebellion from the island of Madagascar, inspired by the erotic verse of Evariste Parry, who collected and rewrote traditional Madagascan songs.

And to celebrate the 80th birthday in 2006 of the great German composer **Hans Werner Henze**, the program features a rare performance of his chamber work, ***Being Beauteous***, a unique and moving setting for soprano, harp and four cellos of the famous poem by French poet, Arthur Rimbaud. Henze's music for this enigmatic poem has been variously described as ethereal, stringent, and full of elusive beauty, and the unusual combination of these instruments with the human voice results in a remarkable experience for the listener. This performance will be the **Australian premiere** of this significant work.

The concert features the combined talents of ten artists. Singers **Rebecca Collins**, **Maria Danielle-Sette**, and **Judith Dodsworth** are all well known to Canberra audiences for their appearances with Stopera in opera productions over the last three years. Rebecca Collins and Maria Danielle-Sette took the lead roles in Stopera's award-winning 2005 Australian premiere of the chamber opera *Jane Eyre*, and Judith Dodsworth starred in Stopera productions of *The Country Philosopher* and the French Baroque opera *Pigmalion*.

Pianist and Artistic Director of Stopera **Vivienne Winther**, flautist **Felicity Gallagher** and cellist **Julian Thompson** perform in the first three works by Sculthorpe and Ravel, with harpist **Laura Tanata** and cellists **Lindy Reksten**, **Alex Voorhoeve** and **Frances Stevens** joining for the final work by Henze.

Being Beauteous is a unique opportunity to experience live performances of music and poetry, combined by inspired composers into moving creations of sound and imagination.

Event summary follows.

Media contacts: for more information, interviews and photos of artists

Stopera: Vivienne Winther 02 6232 4082 director@stopera.org.au

Event Summary

Title:

Being Beauteous

Description:

A concert of 20th century vocal chamber music from Canberra's award winning chamber opera company, Stopera, described in The Australian Financial Review as '*one of the most adventurous and stylish independent opera companies in the country.*'

The program features two evocative works by Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe: *The Stars Turn* for soprano, cello and piano, and *Eliza Fraser Sings*, with text by Barbara Blackman, for soprano, flute and piano; plus Ravel's exotic *Chansons Madécasses* for mezzo, flute, cello and piano. And to celebrate the 80th birthday in 2006 of the great German composer Hans Werner Henze, a rare performance of his chamber work, *Being Beauteous*, a unique and moving setting for soprano, harp and four cellos of the famous Rimbaud poem.

Featuring ten artists from Stopera: sopranos Rebecca Collins & Judith Dodsworth, mezzo-soprano Maria Danielle-Sette, flute Felicity Gallagher, piano Vivienne Winther, harp Laura Tanata, cellos Julian Thompson, Lindy Reksten, Frances Stevens & Alex Voorhoeve.

This concert is part of the 2006 Canberra International Chamber Music Festival

When: Monday 1 May, 6pm

Where: James O. Fairfax Theatre, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra ACT

Tickets: \$30 full / \$25 CICMF members

Bookings: Ticketek 132 849 or online www.ticketek.com

More information: www.stopera.org.au www.cicmf.org