

The OFS Mentors

Janice Jackson

Artistic Director, Voice & Acting Coach, Masterclass, Lecturer

Barbara Pritchard

Pianist and Vocal Coach

James Rolfe

Lecturer and Composition Instructor

Lucy Hayes Davis

Voice Instructor

Jason Davis

Voice Instructor (to composers), Masterclass

Roberta Barker

Lecturer and Dramaturge

Jennifer Bain

Lecturer

Linda Moore

Acting Masterclass (for singers)

Vocalpyse Productions would like to thank the SOCAN Foundation for their generous support of **Opera From Scratch**



With special thanks to, Susan Hunter, Sheila Davis and Friedemann Brauer, who, each year, take such good care of our participants. Thank you also to Andrew David Terris for billeting and videotaping OFS each year!



Gala Concert

Ascension

Sunday 19 August 2018 @ 3PM
Saint Matthew's United Church
1479 Barrington Street
Halifax, NS

Barbara Pritchard, Piano

The OFS Composers

Helena Michelson (San Francisco, USA)
Steven Leidal (Regina, SK)
Hanna Kim (Toronto, ON)
Ashi Day (Washington, USA)
Abigail de Niverville (Toronto, ON)
Joel Engström (Stockholm, Sweden)

The OFS Singers

Jennifer Wilson (Ajax, ON)
Teri Kowiak (Boston, USA)
Laura Johnston (Prospect Bay, NS)
Charlotte Stewart-Juby (Kingston, ON)
Caroline Beaudoin (Verdun, QC)
Brittany Rae (Montreal, QC)

Vocalypse Productions

www.vocalypse.ca

Vocalypse was created in 2006 by soprano Janice Jackson as a way to present new vocal music to wider audiences and to boldly go where no voice has gone before. Over the past 10 seasons, Vocalypse has offered a far ranging repertoire of exciting, stimulating, and challenging music that has ranged from the modern classics to the wildly experimental. As Artistic Director, Jackson has commissioned, presented, and performed in works by local, national, and international composers. She has also presented concerts featuring singers and ensembles from Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada. *Opera From Scratch* extends the Vocalypse vision by helping to foster the next generation of new music composers and singers.

Opera From Scratch

Opera From Scratch is all about creating new opera by providing incentives and mentorships to a new generation of composers and singers. Each composer writes a short opera, approximately ten minutes in length, for solo voice and piano, based on a Nova Scotian theme of historic or cultural significance. These pieces are completed six weeks prior to the workshop and then sent to the composers' designated singers for familiarization and rehearsal. Now in its seventh year, Opera From Scratch is still going strong and has fostered the creation of 43 new mini operas.

During *Opera From Scratch*, these brand new mini-operas were intensively workshopped in private daily sessions and master classes. Lectures brought additional depth and breadth to the experience. Composers and singers were expected to attend each others' lessons in order to gain insight into their respective creative processes, and all master classes were available to all participants.

Artistic Director's Message

This year's Opera From Scratch has been, as always, about the pure joy of discovery. The composers have tweaked their operas and the singers have perfected their performances and we are ready to share our discoveries with you.

The progress our singers have made, in one week, to get arrive at this point, has been astounding. OFS encourages each artist to follow their intuition and inner voice to the point where they can trust that they can sing, move, and feel with honesty and self-confidence. This is what you will see and hear today.

I would like to thank all of our mentors for giving so much time and love to each student. And, to the latest addition to our program, the fabulous pianist and colleague, Barbara Pritchard, we are in your debt!

This week has been about fanning the tiny sparks which become FIRE, burning the music, and lifting the characters out of the ashes.

Janice Isabel Jackson

The Six Operas

This Quilt of Life

Composer: Helena Michelson; **Soprano:** Jennifer Wilson

This Quilt of Life is inspired by the special events held in 2017 commemorating the deadly Halifax Explosion explosion, such as a special exhibition at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. This mini-opera portrays a fictional woman named Charlotte who comes to the exhibit and becomes transfixed by what she sees, establishing a bond between her own past life and those affected by the tragedy.

I Don't Remember Shadows

Composer: Steven Leidal; **Soprano:** Teri Kowiak

Maud Lewis was a Nova Scotian folk artist who made an international reputation for herself by selling paintings from the one-room roadside house that she shared with her husband, Everett Lewis. In *I Don't Remember Shadows* Maud reflects on the worlds of her past and present, and their relationship in the world that exists in her paintings.

Of that fearful night

Composer: Hanna Kim; **Soprano:** Laura Johnston

The text of this mini opera is based on a poem titled the Titanic Disaster, by Nova Scotian poet, J.H. Mackenzie. The libretto describes the sorrow, grief and fear people felt as they faced imminent death. Here, I hope to capture these dramatic moments as the ship sinks.

For Whom the Dog Tolls

Composer: Ashi Day; **Soprano:** Charlotte Stewart-Juby

For Whom the Dog Tolls depicts the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever. Tollers were bred to imitate foxes, (whom ducks have a fatal attraction to) in behavior and look, and to be excellent retrievers. This piece is a celebration of this dogs' *joie de vivre*, but careful observers may wonder: why are some of us praised for being intrepid, while others face grave consequences for acting on their curiosity?

October 4th, 1967

Composer: Abigail de Niverville; **Soprano:** Caroline Beaudoin

A woman recounts witnessing the *October 4th, 1967* Shag Harbour UFO sighting as a teenager. The first few scenes of the opera describe the event as seen through her eyes. Finally, the narrator dreams that she hears the ship land near her home and runs out to meet the aliens. Was it a dream, or was it real?

Ascension

Composer: Joel Engström; **Soprano:** Brittany Rae

Ascension is about the biggest lobster (44 lbs. 5 oz.) ever caught right here in Nova Scotia in 1977. In this opera our lobster is a female and a mother. Although every lobster knows to 'keep your head cool or be a fool', she no longer needs to think about such things because divine Mankind has chosen her to be imbued with magnificence.... But who needs mankind anyway when you're that smart?