

For immediate release

The Romance of Araby

Comedy and tragedy fill the stage as the Ottawa Choral Society goes operatic with highlights from Mozart's most seductive operas – starring brilliant young Canadian artists mezzo-soprano Wallis Giunta and baritone Jesse Clark

and a

World Premiere

Symphony No. 1 (The Rubaiyat) by Andrew Ager



Monday, February 20, 8:00 pm

St. Joseph's Church

Wilbrod & Cumberland, Sandy Hill

Kevin Reeves, conductor

Wallis Giunta, mezzo-soprano

Jesse Clark, baritone

Ottawa Children's Choir

Ottawa Regional Youth Choir

Seventeen Voyces Chamber Choir

Ottawa Music Company Orchestra

Tickets: \$35 reserved; \$30 general; \$27 seniors; students \$10; children 12 and under Free

Online at www.ottawachoralsociety.com

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From OCS Members

At the Door

Advance Outlets: please consult the OCS website.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

with MOZART!

Scenes from Thamos, König in Ägypten; The Magic Flute; The Abduction from the Seraglio; Idomeneo; and Don Giovanni

Associate Music Director, **Kevin Reeves** leads the choir and soloists in poignant arias, seductive duets and magisterial choruses taken from the exotic worlds of Mozart's most opulent operas.

Baritone **Jesse Clark** will tickle your ribs as Flute's hapless Papageno, while mezzo-soprano

Wallis Giunta, a Met Opera Lindemann Artist and 2010 OCS New Discoveries Grand Prize Winner, will melt your heart with Idamante's lament for a father's tragic denial. The Choral Society's heroic sound is sure to thrill listeners in grand operatic set pieces from *Idomeneo* and *Thamos*.

A WORLD PREMIERE!

SYMPHONY NO. 1 (The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam) by Andrew Ager

When it was first translated from the Persian by the Victorian scholar Edward Fitzgerald, Omar Khayyam's **Rubaiyat** captivated readers across the English-speaking world. Today, a millennium after Khayyam inscribed his musings, the revered mathematician-poet-philosopher's answers to the riddle of life continue to fascinate us.

Andrew Ager's **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam** is filled with richly evocative orchestral and vocal colours. To interpret the work, we are delighted to introduce Ottawa born mezzo-soprano **Wallis Giunta**, in her OCS debut, as the poet's soul mate, and to welcome back baritone **Jesse Clark**, in the role of the Persian sage. Wallis, a grand prizewinner of the 2010 round of the Society's New Discoveries Auditions, is now a Lindemann Young Artist at the Metropolitan Opera. Jesse will be remembered for the powerful expression he brought to Matthew Larkin's poignant song cycle *wife in winter* in its premiere performance in the Society's 2008-9 Season. The outstanding musicians of **the Ottawa Music Company Orchestra**, the young choristers of the **Ottawa Children's Choir** and **the Ottawa Regional Youth Choir**, and a new stage partner, **Seventeen Voyces Chamber Choir**, join the OCS tonight to inhabit the exotic, chaotic world of ancient Araby.

Composer **Andrew Ager** writes: "The themes of life's brevity, and the brevity of youth, feature strongly in the *Rubaiyat*. Khayyam's tone is not tragic but darkly amusing and occasionally wistful". Live in the moment, the poet urges, for it is a vain pursuit to seek meaning in a system of rules and thought. Paradise lies before you – all one needs from life will be found in simplicity.

*"Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse - and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness -
And Wilderness is Paradise enow."*

Commissioned by the Ager family, with the assistance of the Choral Society's commissioning programme, Andrew has composed and dedicated this work of great beauty to the memory of his mother.

Please go to <http://www.ottawachoralsociety.com/romance-of-araby.htm> for Artists' backgrounders.