

Meet Jean–Philippe Lazure, Tenor

In March 2011, the Ottawa Choral Society had to find a tenor in a hurry to replace a soloist who was unable to appear. Fortunately, we had just heard a very young Jean-Philippe Lazure in a round of our New Discoveries Auditions. We had sensed then that he was going to have a bright future on the concert stage. That young man stepped in and sang Haydn's *Theresienmesse* and Jan Dismas Zelenka's almost unknown *Missa die Filii* like a seasoned professional! We are delighted to welcome him back to the Choral Society's stage on Saturday, March 17th to join Ellen McAteer and Jonah Spungin as soloists in Howard Goodall's *Eternal Light: A Requiem*.



With a voice that would charm the angels, Jean-Philippe has an old-world gentleness that wins over colleagues and presenters everywhere he goes. We know he had a smile in his eyes when we recently read his characterization of himself, not as an operatic tenor, but as “Husband, TV/Movie Buff, okay fine... Nerd... ”.

“Just do it” is the secret mantra JP uses as his watchword before going on stage. As he sees it, the key to his success is to keep a positive mindset and that is obviously working well for him. Reviewers are full of praise for him. About his performance in June 2017, as Frère André in Harry Somers's *Louis Riel* with the Canadian Opera Company, Christopher Hoile of *Now Toronto* said “Riel highlights included a Catholic mass strongly led by Jean-Philippe Lazure.”

In the same vein, Jenna Douglas, writing for Schmopera, said “As Conte Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Jean-Philippe made his COC mainstage debut in Act II, and he was a total riot. I loved how he moved as 'Don Alonso', loved the air-piano bit, and I thought he had great comic chops.” She was equally impressed by his artistry in recital: “He was absolutely a breath of fresh air; his rendition of “Vainement, ma bien-aimée” (Le roi d'Ys) was, well, stunning. He sang with an open and honest sound, full of agility and ring and moments of pianissimo singing that nearly tore my heart out. His presence onstage was as warm as his singing; you really couldn't help but love him.” In the Quebec press, Christopher Huss of *Le Devoir* raved about JP's Montreal debut performance as Pelléas: “Jean-Philippe Lazure, le meilleur jeune ténor québécois entendu depuis longtemps... Well, you get the picture.

Jean-Philippe Lazure is a proud graduate of the Canadian Opera Company's (COC) elite Ensemble Studio. In 2013, he collected second prize at the COC's studio ensemble competition. The following season, he won a Governor General's Performing Arts Award which has allowed him to work under the tutelage of legendary Canadian bass-baritone Joseph Rouleau. Following on that success, in 2016, Jean-Philippe was selected as an ambassador of singing at the 2016 Jeunes ambassadeurs lyriques (JAL). Chosen ambassadors are introduced to managers and agents from opera houses around the world and are provided with financial and logistic support to help them launch their careers.

In 2016, JAL made it possible for Jean-Philippe Lazure to participate in the International Christmas Opera Forum in Minsk (Belarus), held at the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre. JP says of that event, “It was an incredible experience. I had singers at my side that were from all over the world: Italy, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, America, and so on. They were all invited from their respective opera houses or directly by the Minsk Opera House to perform in this Gala and represent their countries. It was quite a special evening!”

Jean-Philippe's professional relationship with Joseph Rouleau began in 2012. The Canadian opera veteran was engaged to sing the role of Arkel in the production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* by the Atelier Lyrique de l'Université de Montréal. Rouleau acted as a mentor to all the young singers. JP was performing Pelléas, his first major operatic role, alongside the older man, who played his grandfather..JP tells us “Joseph Rouleau has been a special person in my life. During that summer of 2014, Mr. Rouleau and I spent two weeks working together every day to prepare the repertoire for my

upcoming contract with the Canadian Opera Company. We'd work from 9 am until about 1 pm. Afterwards we'd go for lunch and have long conversations about his career, his successful colleagues' best practices, and all the incredible adventures he's experienced on stage". The most important lesson he learned from Rouleau? "He would always arrive 15 minutes early to review his score. Even if he had sung that opera hundreds of times, he would arrive early!"

We invite you to be there on Saturday, March 17th in Christ Church Cathedral to hear Jean-Philippe Lazure sing Goodall's compelling and poignant *Eternal Light*.

Purchase your tickets today to ensure you are not disappointed at the door on concert night.

Online: <http://www.ottawachoralsociety.com/EternalLight>

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Leading Note: Elgin Street

Contact Music: Bank Street in the Glebe.