

L'ORANGERAIE

WORLD PREMIERE: OCTOBER 19-21, 2021

Montreal, August 23, 2021 — The vocal creation company CHANTS LIBRES is delighted to announce the world - premiere of its latest creation, *L'orangeriaie* by Zad Moultaqa (music) and **Larry Tremblay (libretto), staged by - Pauline Vaillancourt**. The performances will take place in the heart of the Quartier des spectacles in the Ludger--Duvernay Theatre of **Montreal's Monument-National** on **October 19, 20 and 21, 2021**, and then again on **November 5 and 6, 2021**, at **Le Diamant in Quebec City** as part of their series — Art Lyrique.

Artistic Director Pauline Vaillancourt co-founded this company in 1990 with Joseph Saint-Gelais and Renald Tremblay. Ever faithful to its mission to create new forms of opera and in spite of the pandemic situation, CHANTS LIBRES will mark its 31st anniversary with this 17th creation.

A creation that brings together high-calibre creators and exceptional partners

L'orangeriaie is a production of CHANTS LIBRES, compagnie lyrique de création, co-produced with the **Nouvel - Ensemble Moderne (NEM)**.

This first-ever operatic adaptation of *L'orangeriaie* was put to music by French-Lebanese composer **Zad Moultaqa**. Known for the beauty of his vocal writing and for his rich music that is rooted in the worlds of both the East and the West, this score creates a distinctive backdrop for this fable based on childhood and warfare. The libretto by **Larry Tremblay** is inspired by the novel of the same name, which is known internationally, having received numerous prizes, and has been translated into Arabic, Hebrew, Slovenian, Macedonian, Ukrainian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Korean, Chinese, Spanish, Turkish, Swedish, Greek, Catalan, Dutch, English, Italian and German.

Having met with critical success in 2016 with *The Trials of Patricia Isasa* (Kristin Norderval/Naomi Wallace), winner of the Prix OPUS Concert of the Year — Montreal and Concert of the Year — contemporary music, **stage director Pauline Vaillancourt** appeals once again to the creative universe of visual artist **Dominique Blain** for both the scenography and video of *L'orangeriaie*. She also renews her bond with **conductor Lorraine Vaillancourt**, musical director of the NEM, who will have nine singers and sixteen musicians under her direction.

Notes, synopsis — L'orangeriaie, a fable for today

Each scene pulls us into the tragic path of the twins Amed and Aziz, two children who, despite themselves, are taken up into the spiral of the war.

Amed and Aziz live with their parents in the orange grove that their paternal grandfather brought to life from the desert. One night, a bombshell from the other side of the mountain falls on their grandparents' house and kills them.

Soulayed, the army commander from a neighbouring village, comes and asks Zahed to avenge the death of his parents: he has brought with him a belt of explosives. One of the twins is to wear it and go to destroy the enemy encampments. Zahed must choose which of his sons, Amed or Aziz, will become a child suicide bomber. Choosing Aziz is out of the question to him as he suffers from a fatal illness. That would be an insult to God. Amed is the one who will go. Tamara disagrees with her husband's choice and asks Amed to take his brother's place. The two brothers switch places. But Amed is struck by remorse and reveals the truth to his father who throws him out of the house. Amed must go into exile in America where Tamara's sister Dalimah takes him in.

10 years later in America, Amed is participating in a filming. The director Mikaël asks Amed to play the role of Sony, a child who faces a mercenary. Amed refuses to play this role which reminds him too much of his painful past. To justify his refusal, Amed reveals to Mikaël the true mission of his brother Aziz, who blew himself up in a crowd of a hundred children. Amed will not play the role. On the last day of filming, Amed surprises everyone, appearing in the role of Sony after all. He addresses the mercenary. For a moment, he is Sony, Aziz and Amed. He has conquered the ghosts of his tragic past. He finally talks of peace.

Creative Team

ZAD MOULTAKA, music	CATHERINE BÉLIVEAU, video
LARRY TREMBLAY, libretto	GUY SIMARD, lighting
PAULINE VAILLANCOURT, staging	MARIANNE THÉRIAULT, costumes
DOMINIQUE BLAIN, scenography and video	JACQUES-LEE PELLETIER, make-up

Performers

NICHOLAS BURNS, counter-tenor AMED	STÉPHANIE POTHIER, mezzo-soprano DALIMAH
DION MAZEROLLE, baritone SOULAYED	ALASDAIR CAMPBELL, baritone HALIM
JACQUES ARSENAULT, tenor ZAHE	SIMON CHAUSSÉ, baritone KAMAL
NATHALIE PAULIN, soprano TAMARA	JEAN MAHEUX, actor MIKAËL
ARTHUR TANGUAY-LABROSSE, tenor AZIZ	NOUVEL ENSEMBLE MODERNE, LORRAINE VAILLANCOURT, conductor

Discover an excerpt from the score

Originally, the creation of *L'orangerie* was to be presented in October 2020. Because the context of the pandemic made for uncertain conditions for the production, an exploratory digital event entitled **Prélude à l'opéra** instead allowed the confined public to discover some excerpts of the score. Here are some reviews which followed its first webcast:

(...) écriture est réellement vocale (dans les parages de L'amour de loin de Saariaho) et l'orchestre, traité sans extravagances, colore efficacement l'état psychologique dans lequel les situations entraînent les protagonistes.

-Christoph Huss ,Le Devoir

At times the voices come together, singing in unison, in canon, and then dividing again into opposition and wailing out contrary emotions. Almost obsessive, a sad song fills the space and inflames the spirit. Effective, long spans of music slowly and insidiously reveal the inevitability of the drama, the fate of child soldiers (...)

- Michel Joanny-Furtin ,La Scena Musicale

La musique de Zad Moultaqa est chargée de cette tension et de cette agressivité que le livret de Larry Tremblay colporte.

- Éric Champagne, la revue L'OPÉRA

L'ORANGERAIE

October 19, 20, and 21, 2021

Box Office [Monument-National](https://www.monumentnational.com) — billetterie@monumentnational.com

Tickets available as of September 1st, 2021

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