

TONIA CIANCIULLI

Soprano

TORONTO

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SOLO Concerts

'Georgina' Nightingale of Newfoundland" Upcoming Concert Tour

St. John's, Newfoundland, Gower United

August 19, 2018

Trinity, Newfoundland, St. Paul's Anglican Church

August 21, 2018

Twillingate, Newfoundland, St. Peter's Anglican

August 24, 2018

Wasaga Beach United Church, Ontario

Sept. 15, 2018

Ottawa, Concerts by the Canal, Ontario

October 3, 2018

'DAZZLING DIVAS', Evening of Soprano/Mezzo Duets Upcoming

Toronto Concert Orchestra, Kerry Stratton, Casa Loma, Toronto

August 14, 2018

'The Heart's Obsession'

Christmas Concert, Islington United Church, Toronto, Ontario

Dec. 13, 2017

2nd Annual with Operation Smile Canada

Dec. 2018

'Nightingale of the North/Canada's 150th Tribute Concert' - Sacred and Oratorio Repertoire

Gower Street United Church, St. John's, Newfoundland

May 27, 2017

Wesley United Church, St. John's, Newfoundland

May 28, 2017

St. Peter's Anglican Church, Twillingate, Newfoundland

Aug. 25, 2017

Northern Arm United Church, Northern Arm, Newfoundland

Aug. 27, 2017

'Soprano on the Red Carpet' – Concert of Operatic Repertoire & Original Music Debut

Toronto, ON

Sept. 17, 2016

OMEY Gallery, Faro, Portugal

Oct. 25, 2016

Café del Arte, Faro, Portugal

Oct. 26, 2016

Thai Beach Supper Club, Portugal

Oct. 27, 2016

Concert Soloist for Signature Events Engagements:

Etobicoke Philharmonic Orchestra Season Kick Off/Fundraiser

Sept. 9, 2017

H.U.B.B Inc. Women's Empowerment, Spring Gala, Toronto

May 7, 2017

REVITALIZE Fundraising Banquet, St. John's, Newfoundland

May 27, 2017

MIAMI Ball, Ritz Carlton, South Beach

Nov. 11, 2016

Manny Parez Concert Series, MIAMI

Nov, Jan, Feb, Mar 2017

BESTIVAL, Music Festival, Toronto

June 18/19, 2016

Symphony of Americas, Fundraiser, Fort Lauderdale

Feb. 22, 2016

Juvenile Diabetes Masquerade, Oakville, ON

Nov. 2016

Metro Toronto Police Chiefs Gala, Liberty Grand, Toronto

Nov. 2015

Opera Roles Performed:

Papagaena	Magic Flute	Opera York
Despina	Così fan tutte	Brampton Lyric Opera
First Lady	Magic Flute	Summer Opera Lyric Theatre
Serafina	Campanello di Notte	Brampton Opera Lyric Theatre
Zerlina	Don Giovanni	Toronto Opera Repertoire
Antonia	Tales of Hoffmann	Creative Artist Productions
Mabel	Pirates of Penzance	St. Anne's Music & Drama
La Ciesca	Gianni Schicchi	University of Western Ontario
Dinah	Trouble in Tahiti	University of Western Ontario
1 st Witch	Dido & Aeneas	University of Western Ontario
Jenny Diver	Beggar's Opera	University of Western Ontario
Soprano Soloist	Mass in C Minor	International Symphony Orchestra

Voice Teachers:

Manny Perez, Miami Brian McIntosh, London, ON

Coaches:

Caren Levine, Alexandra Naumenko – Miami, USA

Kate Carver – Toronto Paul Digout – London, ON

Conductors:

Kerry Stratton, Sabatino Vacca, Dwight Bennet, Shek Ko, Geoffrey Butler

Languages: Vocal Repertoire Italian, German, French, Russian, Czech, Latin

Education:

University of Western Ontario – Bachelor of Music, Voice Performance/UWO Opera School

Mayfield Secondary School of Performing Arts – Music/Voice, High School Diploma

Press:

CBC Website – “Soprano resurrects Ron Hynes and legendary opera singer through one tribute” by Meghan McCabe

Published: 01/04 2018

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/newfoundland-born-soprano-two-legends-1.4601040>

VOCM Morning Show Radio Interview, “Honoring Marie Toulinguet in song” with Greg Smith.

Broadcast: 28/ 03/ 2018.

<https://soundcloud.com/vocm/march-28th-tonia-cianciulli-honouring-marie-toulinguet-in-song?in=vocm/sets/vocm-morning-show>

CBC Radio “Reimagining Marie” with Ted Blades, “On the Go”

Broadcast 26/ 03/ 2018.

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1195968579724>

The Pilot, Newfoundland – Newspaper and Web “Musician hopes to carry Twillingate opera singer’s legacy into 21st century” by Kyle Greenham.

Published: 21/03/2018

<http://www.lportepilot.ca/living/video-musician-hopes-to-carry-twillingate-opera-singers-legacy-into-21st-century-195367/>

TONIA EVANS CIANCIULLI - BIO

It's easy to dismiss coincidences as just that — seemingly random events that might be related but probably aren't. Occasionally though, things unfold with such staggering synchronicity that the universe is clearly sending a message.

Tonia Evans Cianciulli knows all about that. A cascading series of events came together to irrevocably link the dazzling and acclaimed lyric soprano with renowned 19th century Newfoundland-born opera star Georgina Stirling, who performed under the stage name Marie Toulinquet. The pair's cosmic union has resulted in the gorgeous, spare, and undeniably haunting pop/classical crossover new single, "Marie," now available for digital download.

It has also given Cianciulli a roadmap to her future while validating the idea that all music is worthwhile if approached with passion.

Written by late Newfoundland folk hero Ron Hynes about Stirling, "Marie" was serendipitously discovered by Cianciulli as she was preparing to tour Stirling's songbook across Newfoundland in 2017. *That* idea came from a soul-searching conversation with a cousin who encouraged Cianciulli, also Newfoundland-born, to explore her ancestral roots.

As it happened, Cianciulli's grandparents had given her a biography of Stirling (*Nightingale of the North* by Amy Louise Peyton) back in 1993, which she promptly shelved. "I was all about Maria Callas at that point," she laughs. "I judged that book by its old-fashioned cover and just set it aside."

When Cianciulli finally cracked the spine years later after talking with her cousin, she discovered to her astonishment that Stirling's selections of sacred solos and songs performed in concert settings all lined up with ones Cianciulli had been drawn to perform in concerts throughout her career thus far. "Yes, we are both sopranos," she says, "but even within the category of soprano there are different fachs," or vocal classifications of singers.

"After reading *Nightingale of the North*, I started putting together the musical program for a Newfoundland tour, adding historical footnotes and stories, some borrowed from my family," Cianciulli explains. "Then I cold-called a bunch of churches across the province fully expecting to be turned down. I wasn't. The concerts were met with such enthusiasm.

"When I was organizing the first concert for St. John's, I met photographer/musician Chris LeDrew who happened to be friends with Ron Hynes and had toured with him. He asked if I'd heard the song 'Marie,'" a song lifted from Hynes's final album, 2016's *Later That Same Life*, and representing a clear line-through between Newfoundland's musical past and present.

Says Cianciulli, "I hadn't heard that song. I was never very familiar with the music of Ron Hynes. Again, what are the chances?"

Pretty good, evidently. Cianciulli and pianist Evan Smith performed "Marie" in Stirling's hometown of Twillingate and beyond in 2017 to great fanfare — even Hynes's manager was flattened — while capturing video footage of Cianciulli visiting the diva's gravesite and other landmarks. The connection also propelled Cianciulli into another medium: she is now co-authoring a new book about Stirling with... wait for it... her grandfather, veteran Newfoundland author Calvin Evans who gave Cianciulli *Nightingale of the North* in the first place. A full-length tribute album of sacred solos and songs based on Stirling is also currently in the works.

"Marie" could not have come along at a better time in Cianciulli's career, perfectly capturing as it does the Toronto- and Miami-based singer's varying musical interests and abilities which, to outsiders, may seem contradictory. "I am an opera singer," she says. "But I don't pigeonhole myself because my greater goal is to make people access their buried emotions. As (self-help author) Wayne Dyer says, 'Don't die with your music still inside you.'"

Which helps explain how Cianciulli, when not touring the world and home-schooling her two children, also developed as a songwriter and lyricist, as comfortable wrangling pop songs and EDM tracks as enchanting her audience with the powerful vocal lines of operatic arias. “I do take my craft of opera very seriously and I respect the art form,” Cianciulli says. “But there are other forms of music living inside me that need to see the light of day. I gave myself permission to explore those in hopes that others could relate.”

Cianciulli’s successes in the classical world — performing for the Miami Ball in South Beach, Toronto Police Chief’s Gala, OMEY Projects Arts Festival in Algarve, Portugal plus key roles in operas *The Magic Flute*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Pirates of Penzance* among many other marquee performances — are phenomenal. And Cianciulli, who also performs in Italian, German, French, Russian, Czech, and Latin, is in strong demand. Her 2018 itinerary already includes high-profile appearances in Canada and Europe plus a return to Twillingate and St. John’s to perform a revised program of her *Nightingale* concert.

Altruism also inspires her best work. Cianciulli supports Operation Smile Canada, which surgically corrects cleft lip and palate in children, notably in the developing world.

“My daughter Sophia was born with a cleft lip so this cause is very near to our hearts,” she says, adding that both Sophia, 11, and son Anthony, 10, frequently perform with her as they did during a 2017 Christmas gala fundraiser for Operation Smile Canada. Cianciulli also founded Wish Arts, a non-profit in support of the emotional and psychological development of artists of all genres.

All very impressive. Yet what really distinguishes Cianciulli, apart from a gravity-defying voice of such warmth, expression, and majesty it’s amazing she hasn’t patented goose-bumps, is her ability to invest any song with authentic emotion no matter the genre or subject matter. Witness her performance on the synth-driven dancefloor corker “Red Carpet.” That previously released single (available on iTunes) provides a convenient but no less thrilling counterpoint to her vertiginous performance of, say, Puccini’s *La bohème* available to hear at her website (<https://www.wisharts.ca/>).

Drill down, and the secret to Cianciulli’s remarkable musical versatility lies in her past; specifically, with her uncle Brian Evans who died in 1992 but not before encouraging his niece, just 18 when he passed, to cultivate her exquisite voice.

“My uncle was so influential,” Cianciulli confirms. “He was a huge opera fan. I knew I could trust his intuition based on his passionate involvement with the Canadian Opera Company. I think the first thing I ever sang for him was Bette Midler’s ‘Wind Beneath My Wings.’ And he said to me ‘Don’t waste your time on that music. You have a classical voice. Develop it.’

“At first, I resisted. But then I fell in love with opera. And I was on a mission to get other people to love it, too. That has remained a real motivator for me. I don’t expect people to necessarily go to the opera all the time. But the experience of the music is extraordinary. And sometimes combining opera with other sorts of music is a good way of easing people into it and making it seem less intimidating.”

She continues: “When he was on his deathbed Brian used to say to me, ‘Tonia, sing this piece. You won’t experience true passion in your voice until you experience tragedy but for now, try and imagine being in the headspace of this character.’ And then he died and left me with a tragedy in my life. Now every time I sing, I access that pain. And I love making people cry,” she bursts out laughing. “It makes me feel like I am doing my job.

“In the end though, when it comes to music, whether it’s opera or pop or a combination of both, we must do what speaks to us and feeds our soul,” Cianciulli says. “That’s what I hope to do with music.”

Somewhere in the netherworld, Georgina Stirling is smiling and sagely nodding her head.

INTERNATIONAL TESTIMONIES

"Tonia, your performance was so outstanding and so moving. It really made a huge difference for our agency and I cannot express enough how grateful we are and what an amazing, generous contribution your presence made to Victim Services, Toronto."

Bonnie Levine, Executive Director, Victim Services, 'Metro Toronto Police Chiefs Gala'

"Performing a selection of opera was Tonia Cianciulli, an accomplished opera singer who also later performed original & popular music with DJ Aloona. Ms. Cianciulli is a composer in her own right and performed superbly, acknowledged by the audience in a rousing applause."

Alex Milas, Executive Director, MIAMI BALL, Ritz Carlton

"After viewing Tonia's version of "Marie", I was transported back home to my loving province of Newfoundland and Labrador and all the wonders it has to offer. As an international opera singer from the province and listening to stories as a child from my grandfather (Ignatius Rumboldt) about Madame Stirling, I was delighted to learn that Tonia had done something special in the renowned soprano's honour. When Tonia combines her beautiful voice and spirit with the legend of Ron Hynes' music it becomes transcendent. I hope this song and version reaches many hearts from Newfoundland and beyond as it did mine."

David Pomeroy, world-renowned opera singer from St. John's, Newfoundland, and grandson of the famous musician Ignatius Rumboldt.

"Love it. Carried me away. Mother of all goosebumps."

Gordon Pinsent, Actor/Director, Newfoundland

"Tonia's breathtaking performance at the OmeY Projects exhibition launch, featuring Portugal's most celebrated contemporary artist Nuno Santiago in the heart of the famous Vilamoura marina, added a whole new dimension to a fantastic evening. Her flawless, spine-tingling arias added a touch of pure sophistication and her stunning voice carried throughout the entire marina. It was mesmerizing. Her original songs added a surprising and delightful twist on classic opera and left the crowd completely star-struck. A truly world-class performance. Brava! Thank you Tonia for the gift of your voice. We look forward to welcoming you back to Portugal again soon!"

Kelly Murtagh, OMEY PROJECTS, PORTUGAL

"Tonia, your passionate voice took our women on an emotional journey within to fuel the self love and confidence required to walk their courageous path. Your performance was captivating and uplifting - and the perfect punctuation mark to deliver our message! Thank you for your valuable contribution and commitment to making a difference in the lives of others."

Tanya Chernova Co-founder Courageous Living, Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women

"Thank you, Tonia. Your gift of singing and sharing your own touching experience of losing someone to HIV/AIDS at our gala had an emotional impact on our guests. Thank you for your generosity in assisting us to raise awareness and support for this important cause."

David Pavanel, Board of Directors, Peel HIV/AIDS Network, 'PHANtastic Galas