



MERCHANT NAVY COMMEMORATIVE THEME PROJECT (MNCTP)



MEDIA ADVISORY

THE LLANDOVERY CASTLE: OPERA LAURIER'S
FIRST FULL PERFORMANCE TO BE
STREAMED ON "YOUTUBE PREMIERES"

APRIL 6, 2020

YouTube – You are invited to watch the premier Opera Laurier's performance of The Llandoverly Castle that will be streamed on "YouTube Premieres" this evening at 9:00pm EDT.

This Canadian opera tells the saga of His Majesty's Hospital Ship (HMHS) Llandoverly Castle that was torpedoed off southern Ireland (en route from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Liverpool, England) on June 27, 1918. Out of the 258 souls on board, 234 lives were tragically lost by drowning and subsequent machine-gunning of lifeboats. The hospital ship consisted of a crew of 168 men, 80 officers of the Canadian Medical Corps, including 14 nurses. This tragic sinking was the deadliest Canadian naval disaster of the Great War, and became internationally infamous as one of the greatest atrocities of WWI. The manner in which the nursing sisters were killed culminated in an international outcry. This resulted as a rallying cry for Canadian troops during the Battle of Amiens, one of the last great battles of the war. Despite this great human tragedy, this story has been predominantly forgotten.

Composer Stephanie Martin and librettist Paul Ciufu created this opera as an act of remembrance for the 100th Anniversary of the Sinking of the HMHS Llandoverly Castle. This production premiered in Toronto in 2018. While Martin was seeking a librettist to write the text for the opera, she met playwright Ciufu at a Canada 150 concert. Although Ciufu had never written an opera, he was greatly inspired by the story of *"the nurses who chose to serve their country in wartime by healing, rather than killing"* ([CBC-Radio Sunday Edition](#) interview, June 15, 2018).

Quote

"The sinking of the Llandoverly Castle has been inexplicably all but forgotten by everyone except historians, and the incredible contributions and bravery of nurses throughout the war have also largely been overlooked. It is a privilege to help shine a light on this significant story and these remarkable women."

– Librettist Paul Ciufu

Associated Links

- www.llandoverlycastle.ca
- [Opera to focus on Great War nurses 100 years after hospital ship sinking](#) (National Post, November 8, 2017)

Contact Information

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