

TAKE FIVE

A Revealing Q & A
with...

Michael Hidetoshi Mori



Michael Hidetoshi Mori was appointed Artistic Director of Tapestry Opera in 2014. A stage director, singer, arts administrator and recording artist, he is an artist-activist with a passion for grassroots collaborations. Michael founded Indie Opera T.O, an association of twelve small-to-medium Toronto opera companies that are bringing a new energy and life to the opera scene in Canada.

1. When did you first think of yourself as an artist?

I started my theatre and music life in New York City as a child performer. The transition to considering myself an artist didn't happen in any one moment. Sometime in my late twenties I remember looking back on the past year and realizing how much of my own quirkiness was influencing the work I was doing. In retrospect, that moment was closely connected to my taking on more contemporary music, musical theatre, and opera as a performer, music director, and director.

2. Who helped you develop your voice as an artist?

I'm still developing with every production, and hope I continue to throughout my entire career! Tim Albery (opera director) and Nancy Hermiston (opera director and head of UBC Opera) have had the most impact on how I aspire to create. Some contemporary trailblazers I find inspiring are composer Nicole Lizée, choreographer/director Crystal Pite, designer Camie Koo and opera producer David Devan.

3. What's something that's inspired you this week?

The #metoo moment. I am glad we are living in a time and city where we can speak frankly and encourage progressive change, even if it takes hard conversations. The status quo is only fair to those of privilege. I see Toronto leading the way to change with more space and equity for diverse backgrounds and voices. We all have our work cut out for us, but I feel like we are on the right path.

4. What's your favourite restaurant in the city to visit?

Mother's Dumplings on Spadina – I was introduced to Mother's by some of my first Toronto friends, playwright/librettist/director Marjorie Chan and designer Camie Koo, and it always makes me happy, sated, and sometimes inspires a little food dance! Also, my partner Cait and I are expecting a baby, and her cravings for parsley have necessitated a lot of visits to the Queen Street location of Tabule for – you guessed it – their amazing tabbouleh. Although now I've learned to make it myself, so those late night runs have decreased!

5.What do you want to see more of on Toronto stages?

I'd love to see more intermingling and co-inspiration of music, visual art, film, theatre, dance, and music-theatre/opera artists. Canada's funding and educational systems often program us to think of ourselves as one thing (e.g. actor, musician, digital designer, sculptor). Art has always flourished when the greatest artistic minds and philosophies engaged with each other across genres to connect to their time and place. Toronto is ready for more of this and I want to be part of making that happen.