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New Opera at the 2019 Vancouver Fringe Festival

The Woman Who Borrowed Memories, a new one act chamber opera will have its premiere at the Vancouver Fringe Festival in September 2019. The libretto is based on a short story first published in 1987 by Finnish author Tove Jansson. Originally written in Swedish, the opera will be performed in English, with English surtitles. Music and libretto for *The Woman Who Borrowed Memories* is written by Roan Shankaruk, a recent Opera Performance and Composition graduate from UBC. It's written for a soprano and two mezzo-sopranos, with cello and violin, but in this performance the signers will have piano accompaniment. There will be five performances of the opera at PAL Studio Theatre, a new "bring your own venue" part of the 2019 Vancouver Fringe Festival.

The short story, *The Woman Who Borrowed Memories* (kvinnan som lånade minnen), was written by Tove Jansson in 1987 as part of her short story collection "Travelling Light". Unlike her Moomin series which are more lighthearted and oriented for children, this is a story with a dark, strong claustrophobic edge.

The Woman Who Borrowed Memories is a tale of disturbing transference. The story surrounds an artist who leaves home to travel abroad, where she becomes famous for her paintings. She returns 15 years later where she catches up with her old landlady, and meets the new tenant of her old apartment, a recluse. As the women reminisce and share their memories of the past, their conversation turns more sinister, and it becomes unclear what memories are true, and which memories really belong to each of the three characters. Transference, first described by Sigmund Freud, as a phenomenon in psychotherapy in which there is an unconscious redirection of feelings from one person to another is at the heart of this new opera.

The Woman Who Borrowed Memories features performers **Dinah Ayre** (Vancouver Chamber Choir & Players & Singers, Vancouver Academy of Music graduate), **Melodie Corbett** (UBC Voice and Opera program graduate), and **Roan Shankaruk** (UBC Opera and Composition program graduate). Along with creating this adaptation Roan has previously composed and written works performed by new music festivals and performing companies across Canada. Over the past two years, Roan was selected by UBC and Vancouver Opera to participate in the 2018 and in the 2019 Vancouver Opera Festival, composing two opera excerpts for the "New Works Project" in 2018 and performing in the festival in 2019. The show will be accompanied by **Derek Stayner**. [Detailed bios attached.]

The PAL Studio Theatre is located at 581 Cardero Street, Vancouver. Tickets are available online at <https://tickets.vancouverfringe.com/> or by phone at 604-762-5294. There are five performances:

Tuesday, September 10 – 6:15 pm
Wednesday, September 11 – 8:00 pm
Thursday, September 12 – 8:00 pm
Friday, September 13 – 8:00 pm
Saturday, September 14 – 6:15 pm