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To:	Media
Source:	Knowlton Festival Orchestre symphonique de Montréal
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Re:	News release

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### **Knowlton Festival becomes an annual event with a permanent site**

*Kent Nagano to conduct the four Brahms symphonies with OSM  
Bellini's opera La Sonnambula with Sumi Jo*

*Acclaimed guests include singers Ben Heppner, Thomas Hampson, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, and June Anderson, violist Neal Gripp and pianist Stephen Kovacevich*

MONTREAL and KNOWLTON—Last summer's Bel Canto Festival—which this year has changed its name to the Knowlton Festival—was such a success that the Eastern Townships community and Kent Nagano, the Festival's artistic director and music director of the OSM, have decided to make it an annual world-class event.

This year's Knowlton Festival will take place from August 4 to 16 and will again feature the OSM and Maestro Nagano. A tent with seating for up to 1,050 people will be erected on a large new site provided by a benefactor and located on Centre Road (west of Tibbits Hill Road), which will become the Festival's main permanent venue.

"We were thrilled with last year's experience and quickly agreed it would become an annual event," said Madeline Careau, chief executive officer of the OSM, and Marco Genoni, the Festival's president and CEO.

"The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and I, as well as the many guest artists from around the world, are all looking forward to being back in Knowlton, one of the most beautiful places in North America. The natural beauty of the region soon makes us realize that there is a symbiotic relationship between music and nature," added Maestro Nagano.

Richard Wisdom, mayor of Lac-Brome, and Cameron Brown, president of Knowlton's Chamber of Commerce, applaud this decision. "We will continue working on the success of this great event, which is a source of pride for our community."

Lac-Brome is contributing to the event by offering its municipal services free of charge. The Chamber of Commerce will ensure the Festival's visibility in Knowlton's restaurants, hotels and shops. With support from the municipality, the community of Knowlton will pull together to give the Festival's participants and guests an outstanding welcome.

Accommodation for international artists will be provided in the private homes of Knowlton residents.

### **2009 Festival**

The OSM, conducted by Kent Nagano, will present all four symphonies by Johannes Brahms as well as concerts featuring vocal music, with performances by contralto Marie-Nicole Lemieux, tenor Ben Heppner, alto Neal Gripp, baritone Thomas Hampson and soprano June Anderson, among the world's most sought-after opera singers.

Maestro Nagano will also conduct two performances of the concert version of Vincenzo Bellini's *La Sonnambula* with soprano Sumi Jo in the title role. To promote up-and-coming singers, the Festival will be presenting some of the winners from Placido Domingo's most recent Operalia competition, along with young singers from the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Rome), whose participation is made possible through collaboration of its president, Professor Bruno Cagli. Rounding out the program will be a concert by Les Violons du Roy conducted by Bernard Labadie, with soprano Hélène Guilmette, recitals by pianist Stephen Kovacevich and mezzo-soprano Susan Platts, as well as a workshop for children, a family concert, talks and master classes.

The Knowlton Festival Orchestra will be created for the event and will consist of specially selected musicians. As a preview, the Youth Orchestra of the Americas will perform in concert on Tuesday, August 4. Along with the Festival Theatre, concerts will take place in Saint-Eduard chapel and the church in West Brome.

### **Partnerships**

The Knowlton Festival is presented by Festival de musique de Knowlton Inc. with the participation of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and collaboration of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. The producers hope to present a great world-class event that achieves the highest standards of excellence in opera and classical music.

The Knowlton Festival's main sponsors and financial partners to date include Bombardier, BFL Canada and Constance Pathy (platinum sponsors), NATIONAL Public Relations (gold sponsor), Ultramar Canada and Bank Sal. Oppenheim (bronze sponsors). Agency bleublancrouge is in charge of the visual identity and the advertising program. The sponsorship and donations program was already more than halfway to its goal before today's official announcement, which augurs well for the search for other sponsors and donors by the summer.

### **Tickets**

Tickets range in price from \$60 to \$115. Until April 20, they may be purchased in person at the town halls in Lac-Brome and Waterloo and at the tourism information centres in Bromont, 15, boulevard Bromont, and Sutton, 24-A, rue Principale Sud. After this date, they will be available at [www.festivaldeknowlton.com](http://www.festivaldeknowlton.com), [www.osm.ca](http://www.osm.ca) or by calling 514-842-9951.

Information:  
Knowlton Festival  
Roch Landriault  
514-843-2345