



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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Opera is Calling Us Together

Manitoba Opera Returns to the Stage
With Mainstage Premieres of Two One-Act Operas
and Family Favourite
La Cenerentola (Cinderella)
in 2021/22 Season

In its 49th season, Manitoba Opera (MO) returns to the stage to present two one-act operas: ***The Telephone*** and ***La voix humaine*** in November and a family favourite, ***La Cenerentola (Cinderella)*** - pronounced La **Chen**-erentola - in April. The productions will mark Manitoba Opera's first return to live performance since November 2019. All live programming was cancelled at the Centennial Concert Hall when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020.

"Everyone associated with Manitoba Opera - the board of trustees, staff, the artists, crew, and patrons - are so excited at the prospect of our return to the stage with a live audience. We have all missed sharing an artistic experience together, and we can't wait for that curtain to rise once again," commented Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO.

"For 2021/22, I have selected programming that allows us to invite audiences safely back to the Concert Hall. Audience sizes will be set by Provincial public health orders when the Province provides its update as per their re-opening plan.

The productions have small casts that make it possible to produce under a range of scenarios. And the operas are all musical gems that will enable the singers to shine. Each opera also speaks to themes that will resonate at this unique moment in our cultural consciousness: isolation, miscommunication, resilience, and the power of forgiveness."

2. MB Opera 21/22 Season Announcement Media Release

TICKETS

Subscribers will have first opportunity to purchase tickets, which will be available beginning in early September; single tickets will be available later in the fall.*

For more information on tickets, contact the Manitoba Opera Box Office, 204-957-7842 or go to mbopera.ca.

**Venue capacity will be determined by Provincial public health orders and the appropriate safety measures will be in effect.*

A Mainstage Premiere Double Bill! *The Telephone* *La Voix Humaine*

Friday, November 5 and Saturday, November 6, 2021, 7:30 pm

Menotti's *The Telephone* and Poulenc's *La voix humaine* (*The Human Voice*) tell very different stories; one a charming romantic comedy and the other a gripping drama. However, they both explore the effects of technology in our lives and the importance of human connection.

Both operas will be directed by Winnipegger **Jacqueline Loewen** in her MO directing debut and conducted by **Naomi Woo**, Assistant Conductor, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, also in her MO debut.

These semi-staged works, with a minimalist and modern 1950's influence, will feature the **Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra** on stage.

The Telephone (*L'Amour à trois*)

Words and music by Gian Carlo Menotti

THE STORY

Lucy spends so much time on the phone that she does not realize that her boyfriend, Ben, is trying to propose to her. In order to get her attention, Ben is forced to leave her apartment and call her from a phone booth.

THE MUSIC

This one-act opera is a very accessible piece about everyday life. It is lighthearted and entertaining and has been translated into several languages since its premiere in 1947. Very melodic, the opera is a great vehicle for the soprano to showcase her coloratura and comic skills.

The Telephone will be sung in English with English projections.

THE ARTISTS

Lucy will be sung by Winnipeg soprano **Lida Szkwarek** who made her company debut as one of the featured sopranos in *The Sopranos of Winnipeg* livestream in November 2020.

3. MB Opera 21/22 Season Announcement Media Release

Johnathon Kirby returns to the MO stage to sing the role of Ben. This bass baritone has sung with companies across the country and last appeared as Masetto in MO's 2018 acclaimed production of *Don Giovanni*.

La voix humaine (The Human Voice)

Composed by Francis Poulenc

Based on the play of the same name by Jean Cocteau

This 50-minute, theatrical tour-de-force is an intense, emotional ride that features just one artist and the orchestra. As a musical examination of someone struggling with their mental health after a difficult break up, the role of Elle is a true feat for the singer who must pour everything she's got into her portrayal of the tormented young woman.

Winnipeg's acclaimed soprano **Lara Ciekiewicz** will be singing the role of Elle. Last seen on the MO stage in the title role of *Susannah* in November 2019, she has been hailed for being "an expressive singer of note." – *Opera Canada*

La voix humaine will be sung in French with English projections.

THE STORY

Elle is desperately trying to win back her former lover over the telephone. He is to marry someone else the next day and the young actress uses everything in her play book, including hinting at suicide, as she struggles to keep him talking on the phone in order to postpone the inevitable last goodbye.

Opera for the Entire Family *La Cenerentola (Cinderella or Goodness Triumphant)*

Saturday, April 2 (7:30 pm), Tuesday, April 5 (7 pm), and Friday, April 8 (7:30 pm), 2022

Music by Gioachino Rossini

Libretto by Jacopo Ferretti

Based on *Cendrillon* by Charles Perrault

Last performed by Manitoba Opera in 1996

Disguises, lively music, and sheer fun abound in this 1950's-inspired production in which the high-fashion costuming is as much a treat for the eyes as Rossini's sparkling music is for the ears.

THE STORY

In this enchanting and hilarious version of the classic fairy tale, Angelina (Cenerentola) serves as the maid for her greedy, social-climbing stepfather and two ungrateful stepsisters.

4. MB Opera 21/22 Season Announcement Media Release

When the prince (Don Ramiro), disguised as a servant, arrives at the house in search of the most beautiful woman in the land for his wife, the two have an instant connection. Later, Ramiro is again taken by Cenerentola who, with the help of the prince's tutor, arrives at the ball veiled. She gives the prince a bracelet and instructs him to find her. She is finally discovered at home by the prince, back in servant's clothes.

Along the way from servant to princess, Cenerentola overcomes many obstacles with pluck and courage. And even though her family has been cruel, the resilient Cinderella forgives them and finds happiness with her new husband.

THE MUSIC

Rossini's take on the classic fairy tale is considered to be one of his greatest operatic achievements. It features some of his finest writing for solo voice and ensembles. The music is delightfully tuneful, lighthearted, and spirited.

This two-act opera will be sung in Italian with projected English translations.

THE ARTISTS

Rising star Winnipeg mezzo-soprano **Lizzy Hoyt** makes her mainstage debut as Angelina/Cenerentola. Tenor **Andrew Owens** who charmed audiences as Count Almaviva in the 2019 production of *The Barber of Seville* returns to sing Don Ramiro (The Prince). Considered to be a master of buffoonery, baritone **Peter McGillivray** will display his comic chops as Don Magnifico, the stepfather. Bass-baritone **Stephen Hegedus**, who first appeared with the MO in the 2018 production of *Don Giovanni*, returns to take on the role of Alidoro (a philosopher and the prince's former tutor).

Also starring in this production is Winnipeg soprano **Andrea Lett** as Clorinda, a stepsister; mezzo-soprano **Pascale Spinney** will be making her MO debut as Tisbe, the second stepsister; and Dandini, the valet, will be sung by baritone **Nicholas Borg**, a graduate of the company's 2020 Digital Emerging Artist Program, who will be making his MO debut as well.

Director **Rob Herriot** will bring his comedic flair to the production. Manitoba Opera's Music Advisor and Principal Conductor **Tyrone Paterson** will be on the podium conducting the **Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra**. An all-male **Manitoba Opera Chorus** will also be featured.

Set design is by **Sheldon Johnson** and costumes, designed by Deanna Finnman, will be supplied by Edmonton Opera. Lighting is by **Scott Henderson**.

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