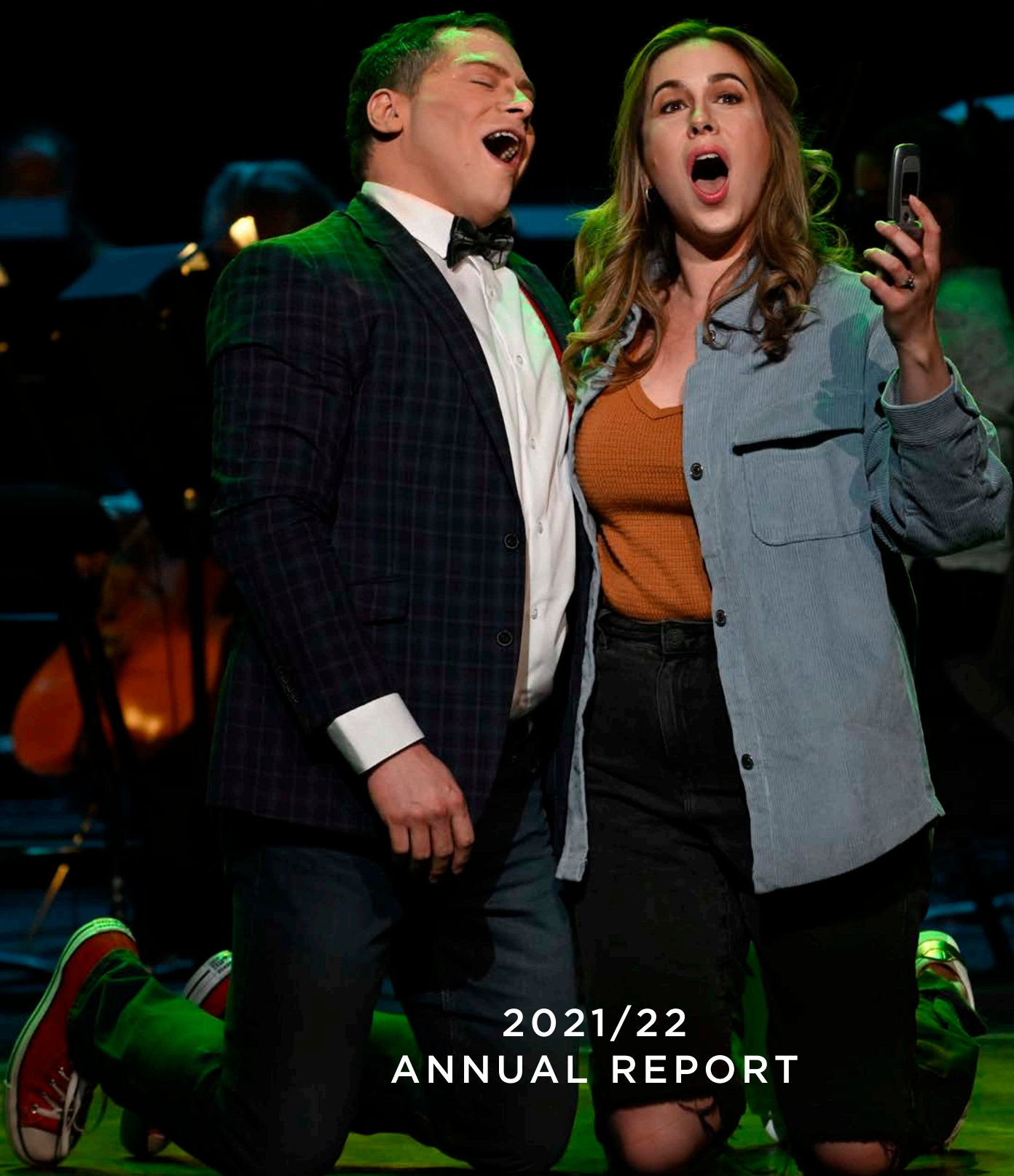




# MANITOBA OPERA



2021/22  
ANNUAL REPORT



MANITOBA OPERA

**OUR MISSION**

TO CHANGE PEOPLE'S  
LIVES THROUGH THE  
GLORY OF OPERA.

MBOPERA.CA



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ongoing uncertainty caused by the pandemic was top of mind as we planned our 2021/22 season. While we spent the 2020/21 season reacting to the pandemic, going forward it was clear that we needed to develop a plan that allowed us to be more proactive.

To this end, the 2021/22 season was designed to manage the scale of our productions during this extended period of uncertainty. We imbedded flexibility into our planning and managed risk by not doing too much too soon. We deliberately chose small-scale productions to minimize the health risk to cast and crew and financial risk to the organization. By keeping our productions small-scale, we were one of the few opera companies in the country to present a production for a live audience in the fall of 2021.

We continued to use digital technologies to reach audiences where practical and necessary. We also introduced technological innovations to our education programming.

In August, we held our second Digital Emerging Artists Program (DEAP), a four-week online program designed to help young opera artists step into the next stage of their careers. Alumni from this program are now working at opera companies across Canada and the U.S., in live performances and creating digital content.

In September, more than 150 generous sponsors, donors, and guests came together at the Manitoba Club to celebrate Mrs. Tannis M. Richardson, recipient of The Gail Asper Award. The award, which was created in 2018, recognizes outstanding leadership and those individuals who, like Mrs. Richardson, turn vision into reality to make the world a better place. The event raised more than \$191,000 for the endowment fund and was the first community event in Winnipeg with a gathering of guests in person since March 2020.

After a year of almost exclusively online programming, we returned to the Centennial Concert Hall in November with a double-bill of *The*

*Telephone* and *La voix humaine* attended by an in-person audience. The small-scale productions presented an opportunity for emerging artists to take lead roles. Naomi Woo and Jacqueline Loewen made their conducting and directing debuts, respectively.

COVID-19 protocols were in place: proof of vaccination was required for entry, masks were mandatory, and there was socially distanced seating in the hall. The WSO performed from the stage rather than the pit.

Given our collective pandemic experience, the featured operas were selected because they explore themes of isolation, connection, and miscommunication. We also used the themes presented by the two operas as inspiration for a free virtual panel discussion featuring community mental health professionals discussing letting go of unhealthy relationships.

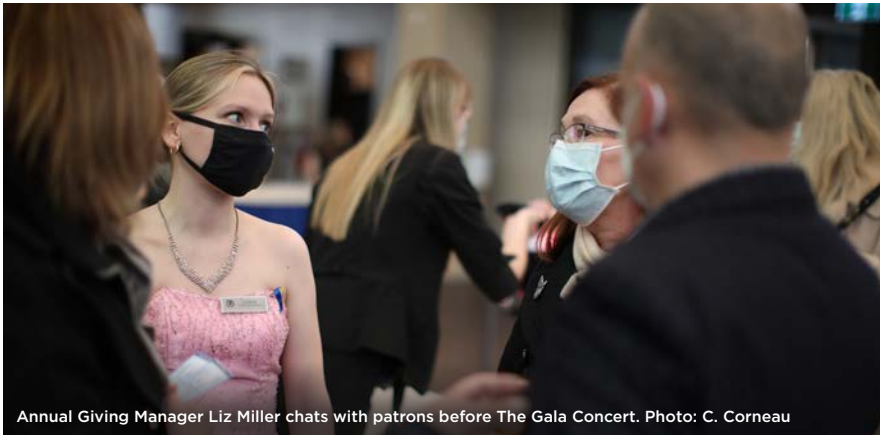
*La Cenerentola* was planned for staging in April with three performances, and with the WSO



(L-R) David Pomeroy, Lara Ciekiewicz, Catherine Daniel, Lizzy Hoyt, and James Westman, The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



Board Chair Judith Chambers with former Board Chair Elba Haid at the Opening Night Dinner for *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*. Photo: Prairie Focus Media



Annual Giving Manager Liz Miller chats with patrons before The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau



Lara Ciekiewicz (Elle), *La voix humaine*, 2021. Photo: R. Tinker

back in the orchestra pit; however, with the prevalence of the Omicron variant in late winter, the board and management decided to postpone the production until the fall of 2022. A one-night Gala Concert of opera favourites replaced the production and was enthusiastically received by both the live and livestream audiences.

This season, in response to ongoing changes of COVID-19 health protocols, we presented a combination of in-person and virtual community engagement initiatives. These included lectures, a Zoom panel discussion, film screenings, and a four-episode series showcasing the Digital Emerging Artists presented on Zoom.

Though the pandemic continued to affect educational initiatives, we were able to provide both in-person and online programming for students. We also incorporated a few innovations: this season marked the first time we presented programs in both French and Tagalog and through the creation of Opera Class Anywhere, we connected with classrooms as far away as Thompson to deliver live programs over videoconferencing apps.

Opera Class Workshops were presented in both Brandon and Winnipeg schools, and 26 workshops in both English and French were presented at 14

schools as part of I Love to Read month. The video series Opera Storytime was also expanded to include translations of two of the stories; one in French and the other in Tagalog.

The rural school tour of Al Simmons' one-person version of *The Barber of Seville* that was postponed numerous times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, finally happened in June 2022. Al presented his show to nine schools

**AFTER A YEAR  
OF ALMOST  
EXCLUSIVELY  
PROGRAMMING  
ONLINE, WE  
RETURNED TO  
THE CENTENNIAL  
CONCERT HALL...**

in southwestern Manitoba. For most students, this was the first time that a Manitoba Opera production had toured to their school.

In addition to artistic, educational, and community engagement work, we launched our endowment

campaign, which involved creating the honorary committee and working cabinet, developing prospect lists, writing and publishing a case statement, and starting to cultivate and solicit gifts.

And finally, our board work and organization building continues to be top-notch. Board members took part in a national workshop series called Equity and Inclusive Practice in Governance offered by the Association of Opera in Canada. And, we started working with Rhonda Forgues of Spirited Way Consulting to audit our organizational practices to help us be more inclusive to Indigenous communities.

Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, we had a robust and busy year. We've come through this second year of the pandemic financially sound and artistically important.

We offer our continued thanks to all the donors, sponsors, patrons, and public funders who have supported us through this period of transition. The road to full recovery is still long, but we are excited about returning to live performance and looking forward to celebrating our 50th anniversary season in 2022/23.



# ARTISTIC PROGRAMMING

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the summer of 2021 was a time of cautious optimism. Daily case counts were low, and vaccines began rolling out in late spring. Over the course of the summer, folks were lining up to get their first and second doses. It appeared that a return to live performance – with audiences present – would be possible. Regardless, the board and management decided that a cautious approach to programming Manitoba Opera's 2021/22 season was prudent – keeping in mind the ongoing restrictions on public gathering sizes and the company's need to mitigate the risk of having to cancel performances or entire productions. The season started well, but then the Omicron variant showed up.

As we planned the 2021/22 season, we were faced with the reality of ongoing physical distancing mandates – not only in terms of the audience capacity, but also rehearsal hall and stage capacity limits. To accommodate these restrictions, management chose to present semi-staged concert

versions of two one-act operas requiring very small casts. While these two operas are, at first glance, stylistically, musically, and emotionally quite different from one another, both revolve around the theme of communication (or lack thereof) – a theme which has become more relevant to all of us as we have learned to cope with the separation from friends and family that COVID has brought about.

## THE TELEPHONE AND LA VOIX HUMAINE NOVEMBER 2021

The first opera selected was *The Telephone* by Italian-American composer Gian-Carlo Menotti (1911-2007). *The Telephone* tells the story of Ben (Ontario baritone, Johnathon Kirby) who desperately wants to propose marriage to his girlfriend, Lucy (Winnipeg soprano Lida Szkwarek). Despite Ben's best efforts, he finds himself thwarted at every turn by Lucy constantly receiving – and answering – telephone calls from

her friends. Finally, an exasperated Ben discovers the only way to achieve his goal is to call her and propose over the phone.

The second opera was *La voix humaine* by French composer, Francis Poulenc (1899-1963). Based on the play of the same name by playwright, Jean Cocteau, *La voix humaine* shows us the emotional unravelling of the protagonist,



Johnathon Kirby (Ben), *The Telephone*, 2021.  
Photo: R. Tinker



David Pomeroy (tenor) and Catherine Daniel (mezzo-soprano), *The Gala Concert*, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



Lara Ciekiewicz (Elle), *La voix humaine*, 2021.  
Photo: R. Tinker



Patrons get their tickets scanned before The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

Elle (Winnipeg soprano Lara Ciekiewicz) during a one-sided telephone conversation between herself and her unseen former lover on the eve of his wedding to another. Desperate to delay that last goodbye, we watch as Elle grapples with grief, denial, anger, and thoughts of self-harm in the face of unrequited love.

For this production, we were happy to welcome two artists to the artistic team making their Manitoba Opera debuts. Winnipegger Jacqueline Loewen, made her debut as stage director, and WSO Assistant Conductor, Naomi Woo, led the physically distanced 40-member Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra who performed on stage.

## LA CENERENTOLA APRIL 2022

For the spring of 2022, we were hopeful that a return to presenting fully staged operas, with principal artists and chorus on the stage and an orchestra in the pit would be possible. Our plan was to present Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (*Cinderella*) in April. The production was to have featured the return of American tenor Andrew Owens (Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*, 2019) as the handsome prince Don

Ramiro, as well as the debut of Winnipeg mezzo-soprano Lizzy Hoyt (*The Solo Sessions*, 2021) in the title role. The costumes were to have come from Edmonton Opera and new scenery, designed by Manitoba Opera's Director of Production, Sheldon Johnson, was constructed in December.

Then, in January, the Omicron variant arrived and cases in Winnipeg began to skyrocket. Considering this reality, the company was faced once again with the decision to cancel a planned production. The artists involved in the production were informed, the costumes were put on hold, and the built scenery was loaded into a storage trailer. It is our plan to reunite everyone and to present the opera in the fall of 2022.

## GALA CONCERT APRIL 2022

By making the decision in January to postpone the fully staged production of *La Cenerentola*, we had time to develop replacement programming. Since we had performance dates and the WSO booked at the Centennial Concert Hall, we saw an opportunity to use of one of our scheduled

- The Gala Concert -

**"The sleeper hit of the night proved to be Winnipeg-based soprano Lizzy Hoyt... whetted our appetites for more...including spot-on, effervescent colouratura passages."**

**WINNIPEG FREE PRESS**



James Westman (baritone), The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau

performance dates to offer a one-night concert of operatic favourites to a physically distanced audience in the theatre and an audience at home via livestream.

A first-rate quartet of soloists was contracted to appear: Newfoundland tenor David Pomeroy; Ontario baritone James Westman; Alberta mezzo-soprano Catherine Daniel; and Winnipeg soprano Andriana Chuchman. A programme of well-known arias, duets, trios, and quartets was curated. Soprano Monica Huisman, was scheduled to appear as the host and special guest artist, Lizzy



Hoyt was engaged to perform an aria from *La Cenerentola*. In the days leading up to the performance however, Ms. Chuchman had to withdraw as soloist; she was replaced by Winnipeg soprano Lara Ciekiewicz and Ms. Huisman had to withdraw as host; she was replaced by Winnipeg tenor, James McLennan. Manitoba Opera's Music Advisor and Principal Conductor, Ontario-based Tyrone Paterson, made his first

appearance here since conducting *Susannah* in 2019, to lead the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

Manitoba Opera remains proud of the relationships it has developed over the years with many of North America's finest artists. The company continues to offer exciting opportunities for both established and emerging artists to continue the development of their craft, and Manitoba Opera's production department strives to create an environment where these artists can do their best work.

### AS WE SAY BACKSTAGE, "STAND BY."

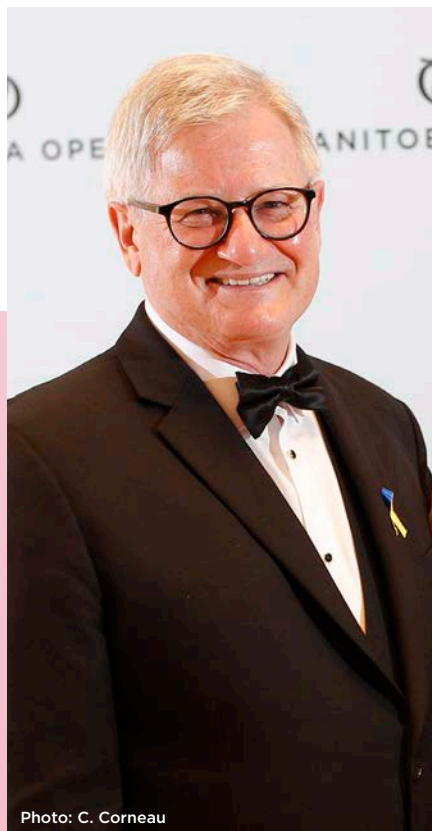


Photo: C. Corneau

## LARRY DESROCHERS: CANADA'S LONGEST- SERVING GENERAL DIRECTOR

This season, Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO, signed another five-year contract with the company. He has been at the helm of Manitoba's only full-time professional opera company since 2000 and is currently Canada's longest-serving general director and one of the longest-serving general directors in North America.

During his tenure, Larry instituted strong governance practices for the board, increased staff, professionalized administrative practices, and increased fundraising. Following a long period of fiscal challenges for Manitoba Opera, he posted 12 consecutive balanced budgets, a feat not previously achieved in the company's history. He led a successful campaign to eliminate the decades-old debt. Larry has enhanced the company's artistic integrity, developed local and Canadian artists, and fostered community relevance through new educational and community engagement programs.

"The Board of Trustees is absolutely thrilled to renew Larry's contract," commented Judith Chambers, Chair, Board of Trustees. "He is a highly respected cultural leader locally, nationally, and on the opera front, internationally. Larry has provided exceptional leadership for Manitoba Opera these past two decades. As we



Lida Szkwarek (Lucy), *The Telephone*, 2021.  
Photo: R. Tinker

come out of the pandemic and into the company's 50th anniversary next season, it has never been more reassuring for and important to the board and the community to have continuity in our leadership."

"I am honored to serve Manitoba Opera for another five years," said Desrochers. "There is still a lot of work to do to get through the remainder of the pandemic and return to full-scale live productions. We also have the 50th anniversary season in 2022/23 and exciting plans to build up our endowment fund, create new works, revisit masterpieces, and expand our community engagement and education programs. The pandemic is also bringing about changes in how we do business and relate to the community. I hope my years of experience will help guide the company through all that lies ahead."



# THE POWER OF VOICE ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

## RENAMING OF THE MANITOBA OPERA ENDOWMENT FUND

On December 17, 2021, the Board of Trustees finalized the re-naming of the Manitoba Opera Endowment Fund to honour two of our founders, Justice A. Kerr Twaddle and Dr. Robert H. Thorlakson.

Fifty years ago, Justice Twaddle and Dr. Thorlakson had the vision and dedication to found a full-time professional opera company in Manitoba. Their leadership through the formative years of the company laid the foundation for the vibrant organization Manitoba Opera is today.

In recognition of their contributions to the cultural landscape of Manitoba, the fund, held in perpetuity at The Winnipeg Foundation, shall forevermore be named the A. Kerr Twaddle Robert H. Thorlakson Manitoba Opera Endowment Fund.



General Director & CEO, Larry Desrochers, presents Deborah Thorlakson, wife of the late Dr. Robert H. Thorlakson, with the proclamation re-naming the endowment fund. Photo: C. Corneau

## THE POWER OF VOICE ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN

Manitoba Opera is in the quiet phase of a campaign to raise \$10M to build its existing endowment fund and ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for the organization. To achieve this goal, \$5M will be raised in donations, with \$5M in matching funds from the Canadian Heritage Endowment Incentives program and The Winnipeg Foundation.

### A \$10M fully capitalized endowment fund will:

- Generate approximately \$500,000 annually in revenue to enhance artistic vitality, enrich education programs, and deepen community engagement.
- Assist with the creation of new operas, new productions, and new opportunities for young Canadian talent.
- Create new opportunities for diverse artists.
- Trigger rapid responses to changing demographics, technology, and social justice issues.
- Strengthen the foundation we have built over the past 50 years and set the course for the next 50 years.

## THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEER HONOURARY AND CAMPAIGN CABINET MEMBERS WHO ARE LENDING THEIR NAMES AND TIME TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS CAMPAIGN.

### HONOURARY CO-CHAIRS

Susan Bowden Twaddle  
Deborah Thorlakson

### HONOURARY CABINET

Gail Asper, O.C., O.M., LL.D.  
Rosalind Dick  
Peter George  
Richard Irish  
John C. MacAulay  
Craig Angus McIntosh  
& Lorraine Beck  
Michael Nesbitt  
Tannis M. Richardson  
H. Sanford Riley  
Jennifer Snyder  
Robert Vineberg

### CO-CHAIRS

Judith Chambers ❖  
Elba Haid ❖

### CABINET MEMBERS

Paul Bruch-Wiens ❖  
Phil Ens  
Laurel Malkin  
Hope Morry  
Alex Robinson ❖  
Keith A. Sinclair ❖  
Larry Desrochers ♦  
Tania Douglas ♦

### EXECUTIVE CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT

Susan A. Thompson

# THE Telephone & LA Voix Humaine

AN OPERA BUFFA IN ONE ACT

Music and libretto by Gian Carlo Menotti  
Sung in English

A TRAGÉDIE LYRIQUE IN ONE ACT

Music by Francis Poulenc | Libretto by Jean Cocteau  
Based on the play of the same name by Jean Cocteau  
Sung in French

NOVEMBER 5, 6 | 2021

**Winnipeg Symphony  
Orchestra Conducted by**

Naomi Woo

**Director**

Jacqueline Loewen

**Stage Manager**

Robert Pel

**Assistant Stage Manager**

Kathryn Ball

Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra musician listing on page 12.



Lara Ciekiewicz (Elle), *La voix humaine*, 2021. Photo: R. Tinker

## PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

### MANITOBA OPERA

**Director of Production**

Sheldon Johnson

**Répétiteur**

Tadeusz Biernacki

**Wardrobe Buyer**

Kathryn Ball

**Hair/Wig Designer**

Jill Buhr

**Hair/Wig Assistant**

Adrianna Oliphant

**Make-Up Designer**

Christian Hadley

**Make-Up Assistant**

Jean-Marc Lafond

**Projected Titles**

Sheldon Johnson

**Projected Titles Cueing**

Michelle Mourre

### CENTENNIAL CONCERT HALL

**Stage Manager**

Dave Martin

**Light Board Operator**

Brian Mann

**Sound Board Operator**

Glen Jonatchick

**Stage Crew/  
Wardrobe Dressers**

I.A.T.S.E. Local #63

**Wardrobe Provided by**

Harlequin Costumes





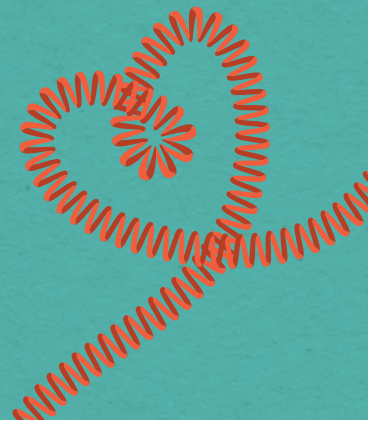
Lida Szkwerek (Lucy), *The Telephone*, 2021.  
Photo: R. Tinker



Johnathon Kirby (Ben) and Lida Szkwerek (Lucy), *The Telephone*, 2021. Photo: R. Tinker

“The singing was magnificent,  
and the WSO was wonderful as  
always. It was nice to be back  
to see a live performance.”

PATRON



## PRINCIPAL CAST

(IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)

**LUCY** (*The Telephone*)

Lida Szkwerek

**BEN** (*The Telephone*)

Johnathon Kirby

**ELLE** (*La voix humaine*)

Lara Ciekiewicz



Lara Ciekiewicz (Elle), *La voix humaine*, 2021. Photo: R. Tinker



Johnathon Kirby (Ben), *The Telephone*, 2021. Photo: R. Tinker



# GALA Concert

APRIL 2 | 2022

## ARTISTS

**LARA CIEKIEWICZ**  
**CATHERINE DANIEL**  
**LIZZY HOYT**  
**DAVID POMEROY**  
**JAMES WESTMAN**

**Winnipeg Symphony**  
**Orchestra Conducted by** Tyrone Paterson  
**Host** James McLennan

*Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra musician listing on page 12.*



Tyrone Paterson conducts the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra at The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

## PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

### MANITOBA OPERA

<b>Stage Manager</b>	Robert Pel
<b>Assistant Stage Manager</b>	Kathryn Ball
<b>Assistant Stage Manager</b>	Heather Lee Brereton
<b>Director of Production</b>	Sheldon Johnson

### WINNIPEG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

<b>Director of Production &amp; Operations</b>	Michael Falk
<b>Librarian</b>	Greg Hamilton
<b>Technical Coordinator</b>	Aiden Clarke
<b>Camera Director</b>	Matheus Coelho
<b>Assistant Librarian</b>	Aiden Kleer

### CENTENNIAL CONCERT HALL

<b>Stage Manager</b>	Dave Martin
<b>Light Board Operator</b>	Brian Mann
<b>Sound Board Operator</b>	Glen Jonatchick





Catherine Daniel (mezzo-soprano), The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



Lizzy Hoyt (mezzo-soprano), The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



James Westman (baritone), The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



David Pomeroy (tenor), The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau

**“An incredible evening! So rich! Wonderful being able to see the orchestra too!! They all deserved the long standing ovation.”**

**IRÈNE LOIRE-MAILLARD**  
Patron



Lara Ciekiewicz (soprano), The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



James McLennan, host, The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



(L-R) David Pomeroy, Lara Ciekiewicz, Catherine Daniel, Lizzy Hoyt, James Westman, The Gala Concert, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau

## WINNIPEG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

### 2021/22

#### FIRST VIOLINS

Gwen Hoebig

CONCERTMASTER

*The Sophie-Carmen  
Eckhardt-Gramatté  
Memorial Chair, endowed  
by the Eckhardt-Gramatté  
Foundation*

Karl Stobbe

ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER

Chris Anstey

ACTING ASSISTANT  
CONCERTMASTER ★

Jeff Dyrda

ACTING ASSISTANT  
CONCERTMASTER ★

Mona Coarda

Tara Fensom

Hong Tian Jia

Mary Lawton

Sonia Lazar\*

Julie Savard

Jun Shao

#### SECOND VIOLINS

Jeremy Buzash ☎

PRINCIPAL

Elation Pauls

ACTING PRINCIPAL

Karen Bauch

Kristina Bauch

Elizabeth Dyer

Bokyung Hwang

Rodica Jeffrey ☎

Susan McCallum

Takayo Noguchi

Jane Radomski

#### VIOLAS

Elise Lavallée

ACTING PRINCIPAL

Marie-Elyse Badeau

ACTING ASSISTANT  
PRINCIPAL ★

Laszlo Baroczi

Richard Bauch

Greg Hay

Michael Scholz

#### CELLOS

Yuri Hooker

PRINCIPAL

Emma Quackenbush

ACTING ASSISTANT  
PRINCIPAL ★

Sean Taubner

ACTING ASSISTANT  
PRINCIPAL ★

Alex Adaman

Arlene Dahl

Alyssa Ramsay\*

#### BASSES

Meredith Johnson

PRINCIPAL

Andrew Goodlett

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Bruce Okrainec

Daniel Perry

Eric Timperman

#### FLUTES

Jan Kocman

PRINCIPAL

*Supported by Gordon &  
Audrey Fogg*

Alex Conway

#### PICCOLO

Alex Conway ★

PRINCIPAL

#### OBOES

Beverly Wang

PRINCIPAL

Robin MacMillan

#### ENGLISH HORN

Robin MacMillan

PRINCIPAL

#### CLARINETS

Micah Heilbrunn

PRINCIPAL

Taylor Eiffert

*The James Thomson  
Memorial Chair*

#### BASSOONS

Kathryn Brooks

PRINCIPAL

Elizabeth Mee\*\* ☎

#### HORNS

Patricia Evans

PRINCIPAL

Ken MacDonald

ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

*The Hilda Schelberger  
Memorial Chair*

Aiden Kleer

Caroline Oberheu

Michiko Singh

#### TRUMPETS

Chris Fensom

PRINCIPAL

Paul Jeffrey

ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

Isaac Pulford

*The Patty Kirk  
Memorial Chair*

#### TUBA

Brandon Figueroa\*\* ★

PRINCIPAL

#### TROMBONES

Steven Dyer

PRINCIPAL

*The Stuart Bremner  
Memorial Chair*

Keith Dyrda

#### BASS TROMBONE

Tamas Markovics

PRINCIPAL

#### TIMPANI

Mike Kemp

PRINCIPAL

#### PERCUSSION

Andrew Johnson

PRINCIPAL

#### HARP

Richard Turner

PRINCIPAL

*Endowed by W.H. &  
S.E. Loewen*

#### ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL MANAGER

Greg Hay

#### LIBRARIAN

Greg Hamilton ☎

Michaela Kleer ★  
(INTERIM)

#### ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Aiden Kleer

#### EXTRA MUSICIANS

(Gala Concert)

John Sellick

VIOLA

Minna Chung

CELLO

Anna Scheider

BASS

Ruslan Rusin

BASS

Laurel Ridd

FLUTE

Kelsey Nordstrom

OBOE

Colin Mehmel

CLARINET

Elizabeth Mee

BASSOON

Brandon Figueroa

TUBA

\* On Leave

\*\* One Year Appointment

☎ *The Telephone  
& La voix humain Only*

★ *Gala Concert Only*

## SEND SOME LOVE VALENTINE'S DAY DRAW

Whether it was for a teacher, a health care worker, or just someone in need of a little TLC in February, Manitoba Opera encouraged followers, patrons,

and the general public to submit the name of someone they knew who needed a little extra love.

Ten winners were randomly selected from the submissions received from loved ones, co-workers, neighbours, and friends. Winners from this deserving group that included a

recovering stroke victim, small business owners, educators, and medical professionals to parents, spouses, children, and a new Canadian, each received a \$130 prize package featuring a ticket to the Gala Concert livestream, April 2, and a \$100 GoodLocal gift certificate.



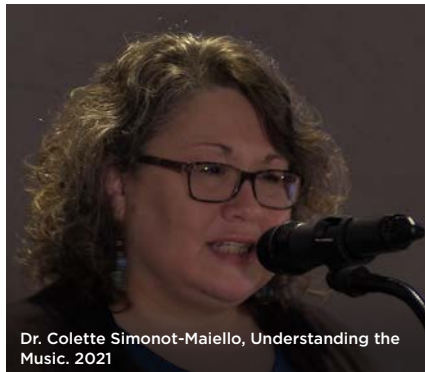
# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This season, in response to evolving COVID-19 health protocols, Manitoba Opera presented a combination of in-person and virtual community engagement initiatives. The last in-person community engagement event the company presented was A Taste of Tarot on March 5, 2020, in conjunction with the production of *Carmen* which was cancelled the following week. Nineteen months later, on October 23, 2021, we were excited to once again welcome patrons to a live presentation, an Understanding the Music lecture focusing on the fall productions of *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*.

Community engagement initiatives held in conjunction with the fall productions were a combination of in-person, pre-recorded, and live-streamed offerings. Community engagement events for the spring production of *La Cenerentola* which was postponed to the fall of 2022, were also postponed and some digital options unrelated to *La Cenerentola* were scheduled in their place.

## UNDERSTANDING THE MUSIC & OPERA PRIMER

Patrons joined us in the classrooms at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights for Understanding the Music (presented by Dr. Colette Simonot-Maiello) and the Opera Primer (presented by Dr. Scott Miller). These lectures provided an in-depth look at the music and stories of *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*, and at the lives and motivations of the composers who created those works. These lectures were recorded and uploaded for viewing online, so even patrons who were unable to attend the presentations in person could enjoy them.



Dr. Colette Simonot-Maiello, Understanding the Music. 2021

## PANEL DISCUSSION: HUNG UP - LEARNING TO LET GO OF DAMAGING RELATIONSHIPS

Our fall production of one-act operas, *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*, centered around themes of connection and communication in relationships, a subject that isn't always easy to navigate. On October 28, we hosted a virtual panel discussion on Zoom to bring together several professionals to share their perspectives on communication in relationships.

In this panel discussion, four specialists discussed how to facilitate communication in relationships, and how to identify and disengage from unhealthy relationships (romantic or otherwise).

### PANELISTS:

Narumi Taniguchi - PhD, Director of Marriage and Family Therapy Program at University of Winnipeg

Sonya Gotziaman - RP, MMFT  
Maureen Scurfield - aka Miss Lonelyhearts, *Winnipeg Free Press*

Dr. Toby Rutner - Psychologist

### PANEL MODERATOR:

Alison Gillmor

## FONE FRIGHT FILM FESTIVAL

Four suspense/horror movies, all involving the telephone in some capacity, were available on demand to view over the Halloween weekend (October 30/31).

- DEAP Alumni  
Showcase Series -

**"It was amazing how they presented the characters of the people whose stories they were telling so beautifully and genuinely... Thank you to John Tessier for being a wonderful host and doing such a fantastic job of presenting these two amazing stars.**

**I loved it."**

**LOIS A.**  
Viewer

The tense and terrifying tales ranged from the 1948 film *Sorry, Wrong Number* to *Dial "M" for Murder* (1954), *Scream* (1996), and *Phone Booth* (2002).

## SIT IN ON THE SITZ

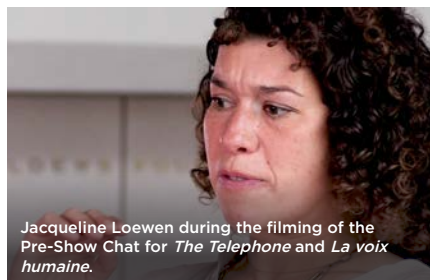
On Tuesday, November 2, the Sitzprobe event returned. Held at the Centennial Concert Hall, 29 donors of \$100+ attended this event which featured light refreshments, a chat with General Director & CEO Larry Desrochers and Stage Director Jacqueline Loewen about *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine* and an opportunity to sit in on the first rehearsal of the singers and orchestra.

## PRE-SHOW CHAT

Social distancing measures at our fall production meant that we could not host a live pre-show chat prior to *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*. Instead, we recorded a video interview with director Jacqueline Loewen in which she talked about her vision for bringing those operas to life on our main stage. Patrons were able to watch the video in the week leading up to the show.

## THE BARBER OF SEVILLE AS STYLED BY AL SIMMONS VIDEO RE-RELEASE

First released in March 2021, the re-release this spring of *The Barber of Seville* as styled by Al Simmons was watched over 600



Jacqueline Loewen during the filming of the Pre-Show Chat for *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*.



Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO, talks to Jacqueline Loewen, stage director, at the Sitzprobe event leading up to *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*.

times by viewers during Spring Break week (March 26 – April 3).

Whether it is their first time viewing Al's hilarious rendition of *The Barber of Seville* or their 15th, audiences of all ages love to laugh at the zany antics and crazy props of Manitoba's master of musical comedy.

## BACKSTAGE AT THE VIENNA STATE OPERA FILM SCREENING

A captivating glimpse behind the curtains of the famous Vienna State Opera, this 96-minute documentary champions the people behind the scenes and on stage and showcases the precise teamwork so vital to the operation of one of the largest opera houses in the world.

Dozens of patrons logged on to the one-day free on-demand screening April 9.

## "EASTER HYMN" VIDEO RE-RELEASE

A video recording of the "Easter Hymn" from the opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni which was released in April 2021 was re-released around the Easter week this season.

The video has received thousands of views and is a compilation of Manitoba Opera Chorus members in record-yourself-at-home video and footage of soloist soprano Lara Ciekiewicz around the ruins of the Trappist monastery in St. Norbert.

The visual concept speaks to the themes of spring: renewal, regrowth, and rebirth and was conceived by filmmaker Laina Brown.

- The Easter Hymn  
Video Re-Release -

"Thanks to Manitoba  
Opera for sharing this  
again. It is breath-  
takingly beautiful."

BARBARA HERRIOT-MILLER  
Viewer

## DEAP ALUMNI SHOWCASE SERIES

Rounding out our free virtual events this year was the four-episode Digital Emerging Artists Program (DEAP) Alumni Showcase series. Over the course of four weeks in April and early May, the eight graduates of DEAP's first two seasons were interviewed live online by DEAP voice faculty member John Tessier.





Alumni chatted about their careers and the impact that the DEAP had on their artistic and professional development, and shared videos of recording projects they have been working on since completing the program. All four episodes were recorded for future viewing and can be watched online at [mbopera.ca](http://mbopera.ca).

### PARTICIPANTS

#### 2020:

Sydney Baedke, soprano  
Lizzy Hoyt, mezzo-soprano  
Kaden Forsberg, tenor  
Nicholas Borg, baritone

#### 2021:

Sara Schabas, soprano  
Tessa Fackelmann, mezzo-soprano  
Nolan Kehler, tenor  
Luka Kawabata, baritone

## MANITOBA OPERA GIVES BACK

### HOLIDAY HAMPER

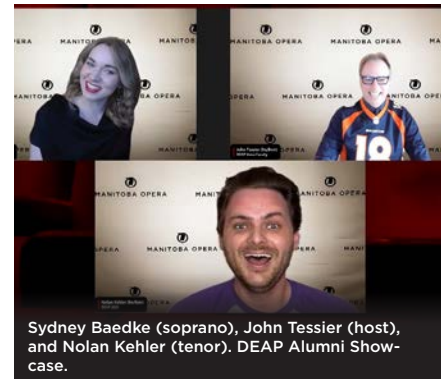
In December, Manitoba Opera staff put together a hamper for a family of five through Peg City Kindness, a grassroots initiative to help families in need. In addition to these gifts and necessities, our staff delivered a food hamper to the family with everything for a big holiday meal.

### DOWNTOWN CLEANUP

Manitoba Opera staff joined other volunteers in Downtown Biz's Downtown Cleanup on Friday, April 29. Staff were part of a group that spent two hours collecting litter in the blocks surrounding the Chinese Cultural Centre.

**"I've had a very pleasant experience...it's been great to see a little bit about how Manitoba Opera works behind the scenes."**

**KEELY MCPEEK**  
Community Engagement  
Committee Member



Sydney Baedke (soprano), John Tessier (host), and Nolan Kehler (tenor). DEAP Alumni Showcase.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Community engagement programming is developed with input from a Community Engagement committee. Membership consists of members of the Board of Trustees, members, staff, and representatives from our broader community. These individuals each bring their own unique experience and perspective, enabling us to identify new opportunities to serve our community in innovative ways.

*For member listings go to page 34.*



Staff members Camilla Cristophersen, Jayne Hammond, Bethany Bunko, and Tania Douglas with items collected for Peg City Kindness.



# STUDENT PROGRAMMING

## INSPIRING THE CHILDREN OF TODAY

TO CREATE THE AUDIENCES OF TOMORROW

### STUDENT PROGRAMMING

The pandemic continued to affect student programming for a second year in the 2021/22 season. However, in addition to online programming, we were thrilled to provide some in-person events



Sydney Clarke (soprano) with a letter sent to Manitoba Opera after her presentation of *Opera Cat* at West St. Paul School for I Love to Read Month.

as well. Overall, 2021/22 was a robust season with a few firsts: the first time we presented programs in both French and Tagalog and the first time we connected with classrooms to deliver live programs using videoconferencing apps.

### I LOVE TO READ MONTH

February is I Love to Read Month in the province, and Manitoba Opera participates each year by bringing opera singers into classrooms to read aloud from some of our favourite opera children's books. As a bonus, students get to learn a bit of Italian opera vocabulary, try out their own operatic voice with fun singing exercises, and enjoy a brief performance. For the first time this year, workshops were offered in French and Tagalog, as well as English.

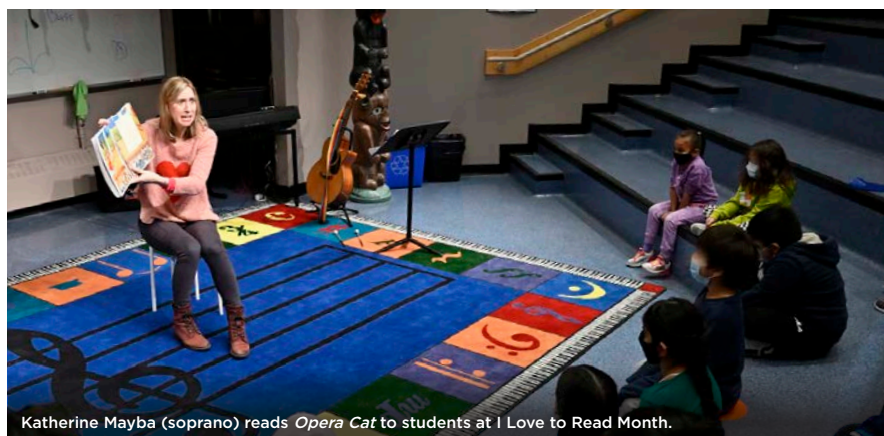
This season saw a record number of schools participating in I Love to Read Month workshops, made possible by the overwhelming support of our donors responding to our 2021 holiday giving

campaign. Thanks to our donors, over 500 children in grades K-5 participated in I Love to Read Month workshops this season.

In all, 26 workshops were presented at 14 schools, including presentations in English and French by sopranos Sydney Clarke and Katherine Mayba.

### OPERA CLASS

In December 2021, Manitoba Opera returned to live presentations for the first time since March 2020. Baritone Nathan Sawatzky-Dyck presented Opera Class workshops to 153 students in eight classes at Betty Gibson School in Brandon. This was the first time that Opera Class had been presented in Brandon. This 45-minute workshop introduces students to opera through active participation in music,



Katherine Mayba (soprano) reads *Opera Cat* to students at I Love to Read Month.

"Thanks so, so much for coming to read to our class!! We enjoyed the story, hearing you sing and practicing our opera techniques!!"

**CATHERINE JOHNSON**

Grade 2 teacher, O. V. Jewitt Community School



John Anderson reads to students at O. V. Jewitt Community School.

motion, and hands-on activities. Nathan modified his workshop to adhere to the health and safety protocols set out by the school and the Province at that time.

### OPERA CLASS ANYWHERE

In winter and spring of 2022, teaching artist soprano Jessica Kos-Whicher worked with Education & Community Engagement Coordinator Scott Miller to develop a version of Opera Class that could be presented remotely to schools anywhere in Manitoba. The result is Opera Class Anywhere.

Designed to introduce students to the multi-dimensional art form of opera in a fun and engaging way, Opera Class Anywhere is a unique opportunity for students to virtually discover opera with the guidance of a professionally trained opera singer.



A piece of student artwork for the Opera Class Anywhere program.

**"It was such a special day when Ms. Sydney came to read and sing to us. We loved it!"**

**CORA CAMPBELL**  
Kindergarten teacher,  
West St. Paul School

Delivered via Zoom, this 45-minute workshop consists of two parts. In the first part of the workshop, students learn voice and movement exercises, activities that explore storytelling through music, and experience the power of live operatic singing through a performance by the singer, followed by a Q & A.

In the second part of the workshop, students are active collaborators, contributing directly to the success of their workshop. This storytelling portion of the workshop features slides with artwork created by students in the participating class so that they see the story come to life through their imaginative interpretations.

Several schools in Manitoba participated in the Opera Class Anywhere program pilot in May and June, contributing valuable feedback to help refine the program.

Students in grades 5 and 6 from Deerwood Elementary School in Thompson joined us remotely one morning in May to participate in the Opera Class Anywhere program pilot. These classes were the very first to experience this remotely delivered live workshop. Their music teacher was provided with an Opera Class Anywhere teacher's guide in advance and spent time preparing the classes to participate in the workshop. Students answered questions about opera, learned vocal warmups, and even sang and acted their way through an opera-inspired version of *The Three Little Pigs*. Afterwards, the class and teachers contributed valuable feedback to help refine the program.

Opera Class Anywhere was made possible by generous support from TELUS for our Opera Class programs.

**"With all this newer technology, it will really help us teachers as we are often rather limited in what we could do."**

**PETER FRIGO**  
Music teacher,  
Deerwood Elementary School



Jessica Kos-Whicher in a session for Opera Class Anywhere.



# THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

as styled by Al Simmons

Premiered over a decade ago and enjoyed by thousands of students across Manitoba, Al Simmons' hilarious one-man version of Rossini's famous opera *The Barber of Seville* continues to be a favourite amongst educators.

*The Barber of Seville* is a comic opera about a young couple in love, their plans to get married, and the hijinks that ensue as they hatch their scheme with the help of a meddling barber.

Al's one-man version of this show heightens the hilarity, focusing on

the comic elements in the opera as Al plays each part all at once (a total of 10 different characters).

The show is 45 minutes of non-stop jokes, puns, props, disguises, and hilarious references to music and shows that resonates with kids; it's also full of opera education including some Italian vocabulary and interesting music history. Of course, Al is quick to point out that the kids already know more about opera than they think they do!

## VIDEO ON DEMAND

Students in Winnipeg School Division schools enjoyed watching *The Barber of Seville* as styled by Al Simmons on demand between February and May 2022, as part of the division's digital activities for Programs and Performances in the 2021/22 school year.

The video was viewed over 75 times by classrooms at 35 schools, serving approximately 2,400 students.

**"This was a wonderful show that my students thoroughly enjoyed! Would recommend!"**

**K. WALSH**  
Waterford Springs School



*The Barber of Seville as styled by Al Simmons.*  
Photo: R. Tinker

## SCHOOL TOUR

A rural tour that was postponed numerous times due to the COVID-19 pandemic finally happened in June 2022. Al Simmons brought his show to nine schools in southwestern Manitoba. For most students, this was the first time that a Manitoba Opera production had toured to their school. For many, it was the first live musical performance they'd experienced in over two years. And for some, they were introduced to opera as a live art for the very first time.

This tour was made possible by generous support from Manitoba Arts Council, Canada Life, Manitoba Hydro, and Payworks.



Students at Alexander School during a presentation of *The Barber of Seville* as styled by Al Simmons.  
Photo: R. Tinker





Students at Alexander School during a presentation of *The Barber of Seville* as styled by Al Simmons. Photo. R. Tinker



Students at Alexander School after a presentation of *The Barber of Seville* as styled by Al Simmons. Photo. R. Tinker



Students at Alexander School during a presentation of *The Barber of Seville* as styled by Al Simmons. Photo. R. Tinker

- Video on Demand -

**"Al Simmons  
is a Winnipeg  
SUPERSTAR."**

**GREG SCHWENNEKER**  
Viewer



Katherine Mayba (soprano) at the *Opera Cat* recording session.



Paul Ong at the *Pet of the Met* recording session.

## OPERA Storytime

In winter of 2021, Opera Storytime brought read-aloud videos of four beloved children's books about opera-loving animals to life through the voices of an all-star cast of Winnipeg performers.

This season we expanded that program to include new translations of two of those stories so they

can be enjoyed by young readers in languages other than English.

*Opera Cat* was read in French by soprano Katherine Mayba, and *Pet of the Met* was read in Tagalog by Paul Ong (vice principal of Garden Grove School, and a classically trained vocalist), who also provided the translation.

# DIGITAL EMERGING ARTISTS PROGRAM (DEAP)



DEAP participants, instructors, and Manitoba Opera staff during a Zoom meeting for DEAP 2021.

One of Manitoba Opera's biggest successes in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic was the launch of our Digital Emerging Artists Program in the summer of 2020. This new program was designed to help young opera artists step into the next stage of their careers at a time when traditional learning and performing opportunities were unavailable due to the pandemic. The decision was made to continue building on this

initiative and with the pandemic continuing to eliminate any possibility of hosting the program in person, a second all-virtual program was held in August 2021.

The 2021 DEAP featured the return of many of the voice faculty, coaches, and presenters from the previous year including Tracy Dahl, Monica Huisman, Marion Newman, John Tessier, Ann Hodges, Katherine Twaddle, Michael McMahon, Rebecca Haas, and Stephen Bell.

Over 40 singers from across Canada applied for the program,

**"DEAP allowed me to develop my skills as a singer, produce high quality content of myself singing, make new professional connections, and to germinate new ideas for making meaningful digital content moving forward."**

**SARA SCHABAS**  
DEAP Participant

eager to hone their musical craft through study with the core voice faculty and coaches and to develop their skills as digital content creators. As part of the video application process, artists were asked to describe a recording project that they would want to produce during the program. This invitation



Nolan Kehler rehearsing prior to filming his final project for DEAP.



Sara Schabas (right) and voice faculty member Marion Newman meeting for lunch during DEAP.





Luka Kawabata after finishing the filming of his project for DEAP.

for artists to explore their own creative agency gave the faculty another dimension to consider alongside the artistic merit of the audition recordings that applicants submitted. Four outstanding artists were selected to participate: Sara Schabas (soprano), Tessa Fackelmann (mezzo-soprano), Nolan Kehler (tenor), and Luka Kawabata (baritone).

From August 3 through 27, the participants kept a rigorous daily schedule. Mornings and evenings were left free for practice, but

**“The participants and faculty quickly became a family and continue to be a community that I can depend on. This program has significantly influenced how I view the possibilities of my artistic career”**

**LUKA KAWABATA**  
DEAP Participant



Tessa Fackelmann's final project for DEAP.

weekdays, from noon to 5pm CST, were filled with lessons, coaching sessions, masterclasses, and workshops on subjects ranging from personal finance to digital brand management. Artists reported spending up to 10 hours each week outside of the program schedule working on individual and collaborative video projects. The remote nature of the program (and the flexibility of voice faculty and coaches) made it possible for some participants to keep performance engagements in their own cities. Sara logged in to several classes from backstage between rehearsals of *Don Giovanni* with Highlands Opera Studio, and Tessa was able to start the program at home in Ottawa before relocating to Houston for the start of the fall semester at Rice University.

By far, the most impressive outcome of this year's program was the production of each artist's video project – the realization of the creative vision that they described in their applications. Manitoba Opera coordinated with pianists, recording studios, videographers, and audio engineers in Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Houston to bring four unique musical narratives to life. Each artist's recorded performance features music that

speaks to them personally and that they wanted to share with a broader audience, framed in a way that visually celebrates their own perspective and identity.

The 2021 DEAP provided earning opportunities for over 40 artists and arts professionals who combined contributed over 200 hours in the four-week session to the artistic and professional development of our emerging artists.

## FACULTY, COACHES, AND GUEST PRESENTERS

### Core Voice Faculty

Tracy Dahl  
Monica Huisman  
Marion Newman  
John Tessier

### Content Creation Coach

Ann Hodges

### Collaborative Piano

Tadeusz Biernacki

### Life Coach

Rebecca Haas

### Diction Coach

Michael McMahon

### Acting Coach

Katherine Twaddle

### Guest Presenters

Stephen Bell - Media and Technology  
Chris Enns - Personal Finance  
Daniel Okulitch - Voice Masterclass  
Tyrone Paterson - Rehearsal Technique  
Teiya Kasahara - Amplified Opera  
Asitha Tennekoon - Amplified Opera  
Aria Umezawa - Amplified Opera

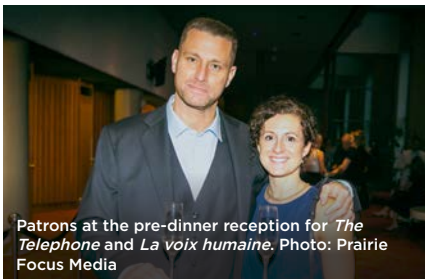
**THE 2022 DIGITAL EMERGING ARTISTS PROGRAM WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM RBC FOUNDATION AND THE GAIL ASPER FAMILY FOUNDATION.**

# SPECIAL EVENTS

## OPENING NIGHT DINNER

On Saturday, November 6, Manitoba Opera hosted an Opening Night Dinner on the Piano Nobile to celebrate the launch of the 2021/22 season. This was Manitoba Opera's first live dinner and reception event since November 2019. During that time, the original hardwood floor had been restored to its natural beauty. With the gorgeous linens provided by linens sponsor Planned Perfectly, a refreshed atmosphere was enjoyed by 62 guests.

Bergmann's on Lombard prepared a three-course meal and Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, the dinner wine sponsor, selected wine to pair with the meal.



Patrons at the pre-dinner reception for *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*. Photo: Prairie Focus Media

Presentations were made to Abbie Grieder and Jeff Sisler to thank them for their seven years of service on the Manitoba Opera Board of Trustees, and to former board of trustee member Robert Vineberg to formally present his Manitoba 150 award.

Prior to the performance, Elba Haid was thanked on stage by Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO for her service as chair of Manitoba Opera's Board of Trustees from 2016 to 2021.

## IG WEALTH PRE-SHOW RECEPTION

Prior to the performance on Saturday, April 2, Production & Performance Sponsor IG Wealth Management was recognized with a private reception for their guests. Guests met with conductor Tyrone Paterson, enjoyed a glass of wine, and were treated to hors d'oeuvres by Bergmann's on Lombard. For some of these guests, it was their first time attending a Manitoba Opera performance.

## INTERMISSION RECEPTIONS

During the intermissions donors, government officials, Camerata donors, arts organizations' representatives, and sponsors attended a private wine reception.

## POST SHOW RECEPTIONS

Following the Opening Night performance, Camerata donors, members of government, arts organizations' representatives, and sponsors gathered on the Piano Nobile for a reception and to meet the artists. Bergmann's on Lombard catered once again.



Board member Paul Bruch-Wiens and Dawn Bruch-Wiens at the pre-dinner reception for *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*. Photo: Prairie Focus Media



Tables set for the Opening Night Dinner before *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*. Photo: Prairie Focus Media

- *The Telephone* -

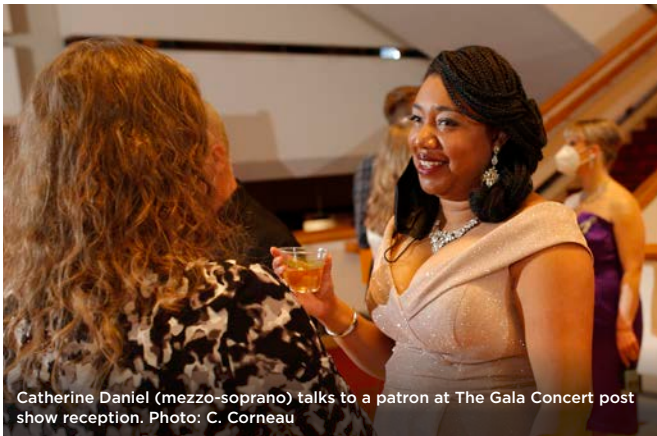
**"What a pleasure to finally hear these singers together..."**

**WINNIPEG FREE PRESS**





Patrons take a selfie before The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau



Catherine Daniel (mezzo-soprano) talks to a patron at The Gala Concert post show reception. Photo: C. Corneau

- The Gala Concert -

**“Excellent vocals, beautiful music, comedic introductions, and a great reason to get dressed up for a night out!”**

**PATRON**



Lizzy Hoyt (mezzo-soprano) talks to patrons after The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

## OPERA IMPACT PLATFORM PILOT

The Opera Impact Platform is a surveying platform built for the Association for Opera in Canada as an extension of the Opera Civic Impact Framework. The goal of the platform is to provide Canadian opera companies with data collection and reporting tools to track the impact their programs have in their communities.

The second phase of this project (completed in August) focused on developing surveying tools for companies to use. Over the past year, these tools were fine-tuned with input from Manitoba Opera and five other companies. The platform was ready for use in the fall of 2021.

As the project continues, there are five main goals:

- To ensure the Civic Impact Framework lives as a real tool for collection of data and impact reporting
- Create and track recovery statistics
- Build back better by creating arts resilience indicators
- Scale the project by creating Arts Impact Standards to align with the Common Approach (the impact standard for the social sector)
- Go global by connecting arts impact to local community impact, and connecting outcomes to UN Sustainable Development Goals

In addition to providing tools for data collection and reporting, the platform also gives companies access to data from Statistics Canada in the form of charts that report on a number of areas of interest to opera companies and the performing arts in general.

Manitoba Opera began using the surveying tools from the Opera Impact Platform to collect data on our main stage performances, education programs, and community engagement events in the fall.

# A GALA RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF TANNIS M. RICHARDSON

RECIPIENT OF THE GAIL ASPER AWARD

On Thursday, September 23, 150 generous sponsors, donors, and guests came together to celebrate Mrs. Tannis M. Richardson, recipient of The Gail Asper Award. The award, which was created in 2018, recognizes outstanding leadership and those individuals who, like Mrs. Richardson, turn vision into reality, and in doing so, make the world a better place.

Mrs. Richardson has been a champion of Manitoba Opera for decades, serving on the board and supporting our mainstage, education, and community

engagement programs. In addition to her generous contributions to Manitoba Opera, Mrs. Richardson has been instrumental in the development of the Winnipeg Art Gallery and is one of the driving forces behind Sistema, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's music education and youth orchestra program.

She maintains an active interest in the health of our community and has helped to build new medical floors and a research centre at the University of Winnipeg. Mrs. Richardson founded the

Winnipeg chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation of Canada, an organization close to her heart, and has served on behalf of the organization at the national and international levels.

Guests honouring Mrs. Richardson at The Manitoba Club were treated to a three-course dinner and musical stylings by the Ron Paley Trio, as well as a video tribute to the guest of honour. The event was hosted by Arvel Gray with special remarks from Manitoba Opera's General Director & CEO, Larry Desrochers, and Elba Haid, Outgoing Chair, Board of Trustees.

This event raised \$195,179 for the A. Kerr Twaddle Robert H. Thorlakson Manitoba Opera Endowment Fund, which provides the sustainable revenue needed to deliver artistic and education programming for decades to come.



Elba Haid presents The Gail Asper Award to Tannis M. Richardson with son, Hartley Richardson. Photo: Red Photo Co.



Tannis M. Richardson and Gail Asper. Photo: Red Photo Co.





(L-R) Dr. Bill Pope, Dr. Elizabeth Tippet Pope, Elba Haid, Hope Morry, Susan A. Thompson, and Larry Desrochers. Photo: Red Photo Co.



Tannis M. Richardson. Photo: Red Photo Co.



The Honourable Janice C. Filmon. Photo: Red Photo Co.



Emcee Arvel Gray. Photo: Red Photo Co.



Photo: Red Photo Co.

## COMMITTEE

### CO-CHAIRS

Hope Morry  
Dr. Bill Pope  
Susan A. Thompson  
Dr. Elizabeth Tippet Pope

### HONORARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Gail Asper  
Marjorie Blankstein  
Joan Blight  
Diane Boyle  
Dee Buchwald  
James Cohen  
R.W. Bob Cunningham  
Irene D'Souza  
Elba Haid  
Gregg & Mary Hanson  
Kelly Harris  
Moe Levy  
Lana Maidment  
Laurel Malkin  
Karen Menkis  
Howard Morry  
H. Sanford Riley  
Deborah Thorlakson

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Judith Chambers  
Abbie Grieder  
Marla Klassen  
Andrea Mancini  
Luisa Matheson  
Thomas Miles  
Alex Robinson  
Shelley Robertson  
Dustin Schneider  
D. Grant Suderman

## A GALA RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF TANNIS M. RICHARDSON

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# ORGANIZATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

## ORGANIZATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Manitoba Opera is committed to changing people's lives through the glory of opera. Beyond our performances on the mainstage, we connect with, and serve, our community through the ongoing development of our practices, procedures, policies, and programming.

- *La voix humaine* -

**"Kudos to  
Winnipeg-based  
soprano Lara  
Ciekiewicz...this  
beloved singer  
wows listeners  
with her luminous  
performance..."**

**WINNIPEG FREE PRESS**



IG Wealth guests with Maestro Tyrone Paterson at a private pre-show reception before The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

Through investments in our people, advancements in our technology, and the exploration of inclusive practices, the board and staff are working to create an invigorated opera company for the 21st century that resonates with our community.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

After completing four full terms, Leona Herzog retired from the Board of Trustees. She served on the board from 2005-2010 and returned in 2015. With 12 years of total service, Leona is one of 10 longest-serving trustees in the organization's 49-year history.

Leona was instrumental in the development of many community engagement initiatives, which have become a major pillar of the organization. Although she has retired from the board, staff are delighted to be able to continue working with Leona as she is chairing the



Board member Dr. David Folk at the Gala Reception in Honour of Tannis M. Richardson. Photo: Red Photo Co.



General Director & CEO, Larry Desrochers; Past Board Chair, Elba Haid; and Current Board Chair, Judith Chambers. Photo: Prairie Focus Media

50th Anniversary Committee for the 2022/23 season and continuing as a member of the Community Engagement Committee.

The 2021/22 season also marked Dr. Bill Pope's final year as a trustee for Manitoba Opera. Bill has deep roots with the organization as well, and has been a long-time supporter of the organization. Bill served on the Board of Trustees in the '90s and re-joined the board in 2014. One of Manitoba Opera's most ardent supporters, Bill has introduced the art form to countless new patrons and served on the Special Events Committee, co-chaired The Gail Asper Award Committee (2021), and chaired the Governance Committee.

Manitoba Opera is grateful to have counted Bill and Leona among our advocates and their leadership and guidance will be missed around the board table.

At the 2021/22 Annual General Meeting on July 12, 2022, members of the organization re-elected Terence Sakohianisaks Douglas, Flavia Fernandez



Raquel Dancho, MP for Kildonan-St. Paul, and guest Scott Gurski at the intermission reception for The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

Fabio, Lana Maidment, Judith Chambers, David Folk, Keith Sinclair, and Alex Robinson.

Returning trustees in mid-terms are Paul Bruch-Wiens, Charlene Ord, Grant Suderman, Daniela Ignat, Maria Mitousis, and Lori Yorke. Joining the board as a new trustee this year is Ray Karasevich, President & CEO of the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology.

The staff look forward to another successful season under the trustees' exemplary leadership.

### STAFF: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development provides an opportunity for staff to further develop or gain new skills, expand their professional networks, and bring new viewpoints on how Manitoba Opera can continue our community service.

Jayne Hammond, Grants & Corporate Giving Manager, was selected as one of 10 opera artists from across Canada to participate in the Association for Opera in Canada's RBC Emerging Artist Fellowship. The program identifies exceptional Canadian early-career artists from all

disciplines in opera to participate in a year-long professional skills development and leadership training program. As part of the training, Jayne benefitted from weekly sessions with her mentor Robin Whiffen, Executive Director, Against the Grain Theatre.

Thanks to the Government of Manitoba's Retrain Manitoba program and the support of Manitoba Opera, Jayne also enrolled in two courses required for Simon Fraser University's Non-Profit Management Certificate in early 2022. She successfully completed the first course in April and was to complete the second course in August 2022.

### BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Director of Development, Tania Douglas, is a member of the Manitoba Philanthropy Awards Selection Committee for the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Manitoba Chapter. Tania is also a board member for the Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba.

This year, through the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Manitoba Chapter, mentorship program, Tania spent six months mentoring two individuals from the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre on developing their fundraising program. The Sandy Saulteaux Center is an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to

Indigenous focused-theological education within the United Church of Canada.

Jayne served this season as Vice President of the Board of Directors for Flipside Opera & Art Song Collective. She was the Mentorship Chair on the Board of Directors for the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) - Manitoba Chapter, and also served on the Scholarship Committees for AFP Manitoba and the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy - Canada.

In February, Jayne participated in a panel discussion with Opera InReach for first-year opera students at the University of Toronto. The panelists helped the students understand the various paths a career in the arts can take and covered topics including managing parallel careers, managing personal finances, how to pursue or fund personal/artistic projects, and self-care practices as a freelancer.

As a Manitoba Mentor with Opera InReach, Jayne is also working with artists across Canada to expand the civic impact of opera through education. The collective aims to uplift and nourish artistry through its core values of equity, diversity, inclusivity, justice, and accessibility.

General Director & CEO, Larry Desrochers, worked with Manitobans for the Arts to successfully advocate for



(L-R) Annual Giving Manager, Liz Miller; Executive Assistant, Kyle Briscoe; Prospect Researcher, Camilla Christophersen; Grants & Corporate Giving Manager, Jayne Hammond; and Communications Coordinator, Bethany Bunko at the post-show reception for The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau



continued pandemic sustainability support from the Province of Manitoba for the cultural sector.

Conference participation, professional development, and participation in special initiatives and programs demonstrates Manitoba Opera's ongoing commitment to investing in the talent, leadership, and skills of our board and staff.

## STAFF ROSTER

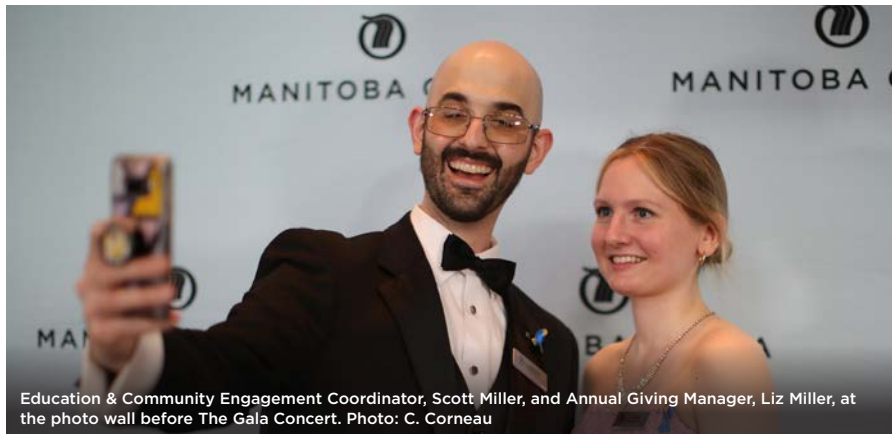
The 2021/22 year was one of growth for Manitoba Opera as the organization welcomed several new cultural workers to its staff.

The beginning of the new fiscal year marked the retirement of Dale Sulymka, Chief Financial Officer. As a Chartered Professional Accountant, Dale brought exemplary financial expertise to the organization, and has been missed by his colleagues.

Karen Stuart joined the staff shortly after Dale's retirement, to fill the role of Finance Officer. Karen has a long history of supporting the arts and community organizations having previously worked with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and The Link (Macdonald Youth Services).



Mezzo-soprano Catherine Daniel and General Director & CEO, Larry Desrochers, at the post show reception for The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau



Education & Community Engagement Coordinator, Scott Miller, and Annual Giving Manager, Liz Miller, at the photo wall before The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

Beginning in June 2021, Camilla Christophersen became a member of the staff team to support the A. Kerr Twaddle Robert H. Thorlakson Manitoba Opera Endowment Fund Campaign as Campaign Researcher. Her primary responsibilities are to assist with fundraising and event coordination for the campaign.

In September, Manitoba Opera contracted Susan A. Thompson as the Endowment Campaign Executive Consultant for The Power of Voice campaign. In this role, Susan is assisting staff with building connections in the community and overall campaign strategy.

In February 2022, Manitoba Opera welcomed Kyle Briscoe to the team in the newly created role of Executive Assistant. He provides administrative and research support to the General Director & CEO and the Director of Operations, and manages monthly board, committee, and staff meetings.

In April 2022, Jayne Hammond left the company to pursue fundraising opportunities in the post-secondary education sector. During her time with Manitoba Opera, Jayne oversaw many sponsor and funder relationships and was instrumental in their growth and support of the company. The Digital Emerging Artists Program, in particular, may not have come to life as quickly without Jayne's diligent work to seek funding and

lending her perspective as an opera singer to help shape the program.

In May 2022, Ashley Boychuk joined the company as the Grants and Corporate Giving Manager.

Ashley's work will involve building relationships with the company's supporters, including institution and corporate funders, and continuing to build on MO's legacy as one of the province's leading arts organizations.

## GOVERNANCE

Throughout the fall and winter, the Board of Trustees participated in the Association for Opera in Canada's webinar series Equity in Governance. This three-part series, facilitated by Alden E. Habacon, focused on establishing inclusive workplace traits; practical tools for a more strategic approach for achieving inclusivity and disrupting implicit bias in the workplace; gaining an understanding of cognitive biases and how they can negatively impact decision-making and the psychological health and safety of others; and tactics and a strategic framework for disrupting implicit bias.

In April 2022, the Governance Committee launched Manitoba Opera's Accessible Employment Policy. This board-approved policy aligns with Manitoba Opera's

values to provide equitable employment opportunities for Manitobans and with the provincially legislated Accessibility Act for Manitobans. The policy seeks to remove or reduce disability barriers for employees during the recruitment, training, supervision, management, promotion, and termination of their employment.

## BUILDING BRIDGES

The 2021/22 season marked the third year of Manitoba Opera's Building Bridges program. Designed to connect to, and build relationships with Indigenous communities in Manitoba, the organization was pleased to engage Rhonda Forgues of Spirited Ways Consulting. Rhonda is performing a full audit of the organization, including reviewing policies, practices, and programming. Throughout the 2022/23 season, Rhonda will be making recommendations on how Manitoba Opera can increase Indigenous participation in the organization at the audience, staff, board, and committee levels.

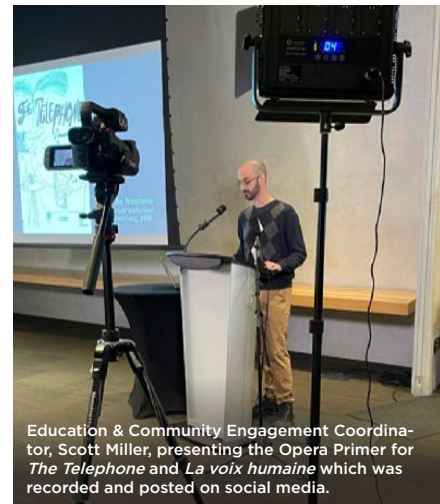
Rhonda's background and experience crosses a variety of different sectors including government, non-profit community-based organizations, and the private sector.

Spirited Ways Consulting is an Indigenous-owned business that provides organizational development support including strategic, annual, program planning and related processes, and systems and project management. As well, advice, guidance, planning, and implementation support is provided to businesses and organizations who would like to develop plans and strategies to action Reconciliation.

## ADVANCING DIGITAL & VIRTUAL CONTENT

In the summer of 2021, Scott Miller, Education & Community Engagement Coordinator, researched and coordinated the purchase of audio, video, and lighting equipment for MO to use in recording and producing small-scale projects.

Staff members Bethany Bunko, Liz Miller, and Scott Miller were trained in the use of that equipment by Landon Lake, a Winnipeg-based



Education & Community Engagement Coordinator, Scott Miller, presenting the Opera Primer for *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine* which was recorded and posted on social media.

videographer and instructor for the Winnipeg Film Group. This investment in equipment and training has enabled MO to produce in-house, high-quality recordings for educational and community engagement programming.

Further investment in equipment and staff training for live streaming gave MO the capability to develop its first remotely presented live opera education workshop - Opera Class Anywhere - and to broadcast a livestream of the 2021/22 Annual General Meeting.



A patron gets their digital ticket scanned at The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

## PATRONS' RETURN TO LIVE PERFORMANCES & COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Throughout the season, Manitoba Opera communicated with patrons via phone and electronic surveys to gauge their willingness to return to live performances in the Centennial Concert Hall in the fall. The data gathered from these surveys determined the safety measures we employed to help patrons feel safe while attending performances.

Based on patron response for *La Cenerentola* and the Gala Concert in April, Manitoba Opera continued with safety protocols,

such as proof of vaccination, social distance seating (two seats between each patron cohort), and recommendation of wearing masks when not eating or drinking.

In March, prior to the Gala Concert, 75% of patrons surveyed were in favour of these protocols even though these restrictions had been lifted by Public Health.



# FINANCE

## FINANCE

Manitoba Opera posted an operating surplus of \$5,000 following a transfer of \$268,138 to its board-designated Operating Reserve Fund. Management anticipates a significant draw down of the Operating Reserve Fund to support activities for FY 2023, as the organization works through the recovery period of the pandemic.

## GRANTS

Operational funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, Manitoba Arts Council, the Province of Manitoba, and Winnipeg Arts Council remained constant at \$255,000, \$220,000, \$150,000, and \$121,500 respectively.

Throughout the course of the year, Manitoba Opera accessed various government programs in response to the COVID 19 pandemic: \$166,457 from the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the Tourism and Hospitality Recovery Program under the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan; \$50,000 from the Winnipeg Foundation from the Stabilization Grant; and \$116,000 from the Manitoba Arts Council Sustainability Fund.

## BOX OFFICE

Due to COVID 19, the 2020/21 season was modified to continue operating under public health orders.

A surge in Covid-19 cases caused the postponement of *La Cenerentola* to the fall of FY 2023. A Gala Concert replaced this production in April. The overall box office revenues resulted in \$82,712 which was an increase of \$61,039 from \$21,673 in FY21.

## FUNDRAISING

As with the previous year, fundraising events were either postponed or done virtually. The Gail Asper Award, honoring Mrs. Tannis M. Richardson was held in the fall of 2021, with proceeds deposited to the endowment fund.

Fundraising from all operational campaigns was \$680,719. Included in this amount is \$13,038 that was donated back by patrons for performance tickets, special events, and parking fees.

## IN-KIND SPONSORSHIPS & COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS

In the normal course of operations, Manitoba Opera exchanges tickets for its productions in consideration for various goods and services. These transactions are accounted for in the statement of operations at the fair value of the tickets exchanged which amounted to \$0 due to the continuance of COVID-19 and the public health order restricted the company's ability to hold live performances.

## EXPENSES

Overall, savings were achieved in all departmental budgets. Development had an increase in expenses due to the work on the endowment campaign. These were offset by revenues received from the endowment fund.

## ENDOWMENT

To help solidify the long-term future of Manitoba Opera, the Board of Trustees established an endowment fund through The Winnipeg Foundation. Launched in 2009/10, gifts made to the A. Kerr Twaddle Robert H. Thorlakson Manitoba Opera Endowment Fund will grow over time and provide a significant stream of revenue to help Manitoba Opera continue to serve the community with meaningful and inspiring programming.

During the fiscal period ending May 31, 2022, the fund grew to \$1,383,300 from \$765,196 at the end of the FY 2021.

- The Gala Concert -

"...reminded us all  
of how much we  
have missed hearing  
voices of this tremen-  
dously high calibre,  
singing together..."

**SCHMOPERA**

# VOLUNTEERS

Manitoba Opera can't do what we do without the help of our outstanding volunteers. This season, volunteers provided invaluable services that included preparing mailings, serving on committees, assisting at the photo

wall in the lobby, and collecting donations at our live events.

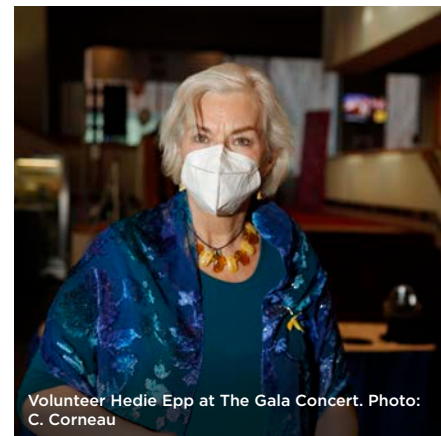
In a show of support for Ukraine, at the Gala Concert April 2, volunteers also passed out blue and yellow ribbons that had been assembled

by members of the 350th Rangers, 99th Guides, and 31st Pathfinders.

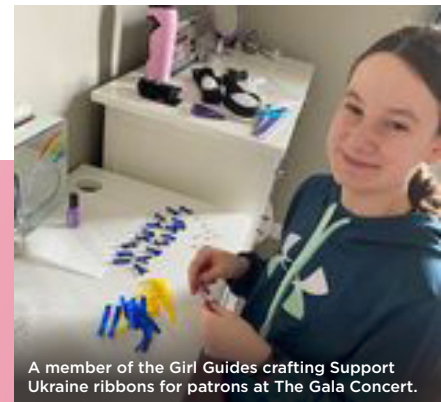
Altogether, 61 individual volunteers provided 91 hours of service this season.

## 2021/22 SEASON VOLUNTEERS

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Mira Hummerston	350th Rangers (4)
Charlene Ord	99th Guides (15)
Maggie Kahler	31st Pathfinders (19)



Volunteer Hedie Epp at The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau



A member of the Girl Guides crafting Support Ukraine ribbons for patrons at The Gala Concert.

## MANITOBA OPERA SUPPORTS UKRAINE

At the Gala Concert April 2, Manitoba Opera showed its support for Ukraine.

Upon entering the Centennial Concert Hall, patrons were greeted by volunteers who distributed Support Ukraine ribbons. Above the lobby hung a large Canadian and a large Ukrainian flag.

On stage, the concert began with a moving appeal by MO Chorus member George Nytepchuk to remind us to support the people of Ukraine. The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra then played the Ukrainian and Canadian national anthems.

**Thanks to the Girl Guides!** Our thanks and appreciation to members of the 99th Guides, 31st Pathfinders, and 350th Rangers and their leaders who volunteered

their time to make the Support Ukraine ribbons. These Girl Guides of Canada units are located in St. Vital and their participants range in age from nine to 17.

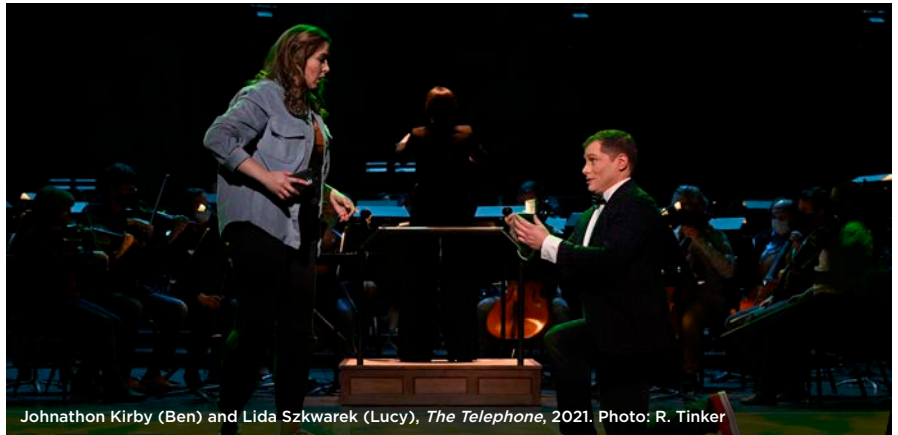
In all, 38 volunteers donated 28.5 hours participating in this initiative.



- *The Telephone* and  
*La voix humaine* -

"The quality of the  
music with excellent  
musicians and excep-  
tional performers."

**PATRON**



Johnathon Kirby (Ben) and Lida Szkwarek (Lucy), *The Telephone*, 2021. Photo: R. Tinker



Soprano Lara Ciekiewicz and mezzo-soprano Catherine Daniel, *The Gala Concert*, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



Patrons gather in the lobby before *The Gala Concert*. Photo: C. Corneau



Volunteer Teresa Tacchi ready to collect donations at the intermission for *The Gala Reception*. Photo: C. Corneau



Tannis M. Richardson and Karen Menkis at the *Gala Reception in Honour of Tannis M. Richardson*. Photo: Red Photo Co.

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(L-R) General Director & CEO, Larry Desrochers; Board Chair, Judith Chambers; past board members, Robert Vineberg, Dr. Jeffrey Sisler, Abby Grieder; and Past Board Chair, Elba Haid at the Opening Night Dinner for *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*. Photo: Prairie Focus Media



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With the generous support of the Winnipeg Arts Council with funding from the City of Winnipeg.



With the generous support of the Manitoba Arts Council.





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Listings include donations made from June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022.



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Chorus member George Nytepchuk gives an address about the war in Ukraine prior to The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau



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**MANY THANKS TO ALL OF OUR DONORS WHO  
 GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED MANITOBA OPERA WITH  
 DONATIONS UNDER \$50.**



Patrons pinning on Support Ukraine ribbons at The Gala Concert.  
 Photo: C. Corneau

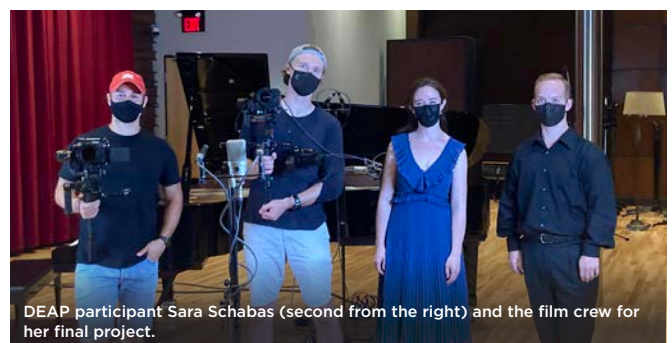
- The Gala Concert -

**"What a wonderful evening!  
 It was so nice to feel the  
 'opera shivers' again!!"**

**HEDIE L. EPP**  
 Patron and Volunteer



Patrons enjoy refreshments at the post-show reception for The Gala Concert.  
 Photo: C. Corneau



DEAP participant Sara Schabas (second from the right) and the film crew for her final project.

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 GIVING PROGRAM**

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Patrons at the Opening Night Dinner reception  
 before *The Telephone* and *La voix humaine*. Photo:  
 Prairie Focus Media



## GRATITUDE

## GIFT-IN-KIND TICKET DONORS

*The Telephone/La voix humaine & La Cenerentola*

The generosity of our season ticket holders assisted in our return to the stage this year. Thank you to the individuals below.

Listing includes ticket donations made between June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022.

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City councillor Brian Mayes and Dr. Alison Marshall at the intermission reception at The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

- The Gala Concert -

**"The performance last night was  
absolutely fabulous, start to finish..."**

**And the production was perfect. Honestly, I was so  
impressed. The livestream was extremely well done."**

**LINDA FREED**  
Livestream Viewer



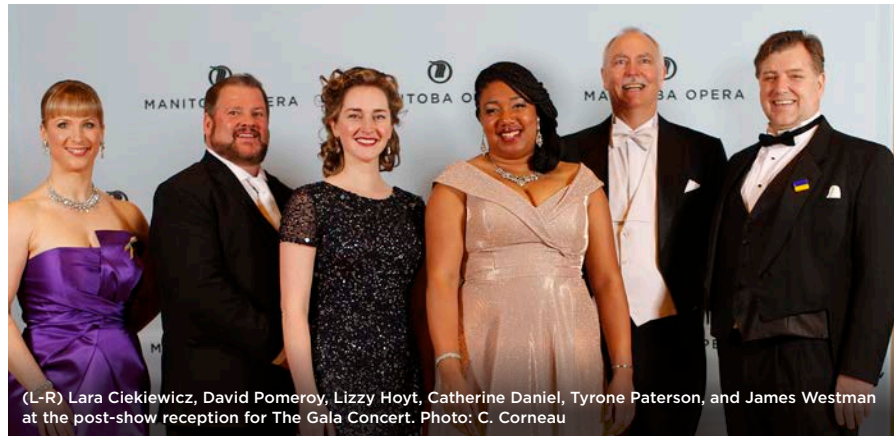
Johnathon Kirby (Ben) and Lida Szkwarek (Lucy),  
*The Telephone*, 2021. Photo: R. Tinker



## IN MEMORIAM: BRUCE LANG

Manitoba Opera's first administrative director, Bruce Lang, passed away peacefully on November 4, 2021, in Vancouver, BC.

In 1972, Bruce was hired to run the newly formed Manitoba Opera Association. He retired in 1992 and was awarded the City of Winnipeg Community Service Award. For 20 years, from the company's



(L-R) Lara Ciekiewicz, David Pomeroy, Lizzy Hoyt, Catherine Daniel, Tyrone Paterson, and James Westman  
at the post-show reception for The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau

very first staged presentation of *Madama Butterfly* in 1973, Bruce and the artistic director at that time, the late Irving Guttman, C.M., became an inseparable team.

Upon Bruce's retirement, Irving said:

"We came to that production (*Madama Butterfly*) as complete strangers but developed an instant rapport. Within a very short time, I learned that Bruce is a unique and very talented person, especially sensitive to the needs of others... Loved and respected by all who meet him, Bruce has managed the affairs of Manitoba Opera almost single-handedly. Artists from all over the world who have come to sing on our stage value his sensitivity and warmth, his concern for every detail they need

to sing and give their best...I must say there is only one Bruce."

Bruce Lang was born in Winnipeg. He graduated from Gordon Bell High School and began working for the Winnipeg Electric Company in 1947. In 1948 he switched gears and embarked on a 24-year career in the insurance industry, employed by Stratton Whitaker Ltd. and the Saskatchewan Mutual Insurance Company.

An active member of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Bruce served as a chorister, and for many years as a member of the Vestry. He was a member of the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir, serving as president for three consecutive terms.

In 1996 he moved to BC.





James Westman (baritone), The Gala Concert. Photo: C. Corneau



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Lara Ciekiewicz (Elle), *La voix humaine*, 2021. Photo: R. Tinker