

MANITOBA  
• OPERA

2023/24 SEASON Presented by BMO 



RIEL'S HEART OF THE NORTH

Carmen

“ This opera turned my ideas about opera as such upside down. It was something incredible! ”

– I. Klimenko, patron  
LA CENERENTOLA, 2022



La Cenerentola, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker

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

*Casting subject to change*

## TICKETS

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**IN PERSON**

Manitoba Opera General Office, Lower Level,  
Centennial Concert Hall, 555 Main St, Winnipeg

“ ...another evening highlight, her prismatic characterization equal parts strength, and delicate fragility. ”

– *The Free Press*  
50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONCERT, 2023

### PERFORMANCE VENUE

Centennial Concert Hall  
555 Main St., Winnipeg, MB



James McLennan (Little Bat) and Lara Ciekiewicz (Susannah), *Susannah*, 2019. Photo: C. Corneau



Soprano Hiromi Omura,  
50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary Concert,  
2023. Photo: R. Tinker

A WORLD PREMIERE!



# Li Keur

RIEL'S HEART OF THE NORTH

MANITOBA  
OPERA

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 18 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 22 7:00 PM

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 24 7:30 PM



**Librettist/  
Storyteller**

Suzanne M. Steele



**Composer/  
Fiddler**

Alex Kusturok



**Composer**

Neil Weisensel



**Director**

Simon Miron

## A CELEBRATION OF MÉTIS WOMEN, LANGUAGE & CULTURE


*Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* explores a little-known chapter in Louis Riel's life (early 1870s) and focuses on the beauty and love of the homeland and of its people - the heart of the north, with a focus on the central role of women in the cultural and economic history of this nation of nations.

The Métis peoples' past, present, and future are reimagined in this 21st century work dedicated to reconciliation as the artists honour all sides of the ancestral blanket.

This new work of music and theatre is written and conceptualized by Métis poet/librettist Dr. Suzanne Steele (Gaudry/Fayant), with music by Métis composer/fiddler Alex Kusturok and composer Neil Weisensel.

A cross-cultural collaboration, this work is for orchestra, soloists, and choruses, and will be sung and spoken in Heritage-Michif, French-Michif, Anishinaabemowin, French, and English. It also features traditional and contemporary Métis music and dance.

*Li Keur* - "the heart" in Michif - places Métis and all Indigenous women at the heart of this story as it celebrates the multi-faceted roles they have played, and continue to play, in the making of a nation.

UNDERWRITTEN by BMO 



**LOUIS RIEL** (1844-1885)  
THE FATHER OF MANITOBA

Louis Riel was the Métis leader and Canadian Member of Parliament who led Manitoba into Confederation and championed the rights of the Métis peoples, their nation, and all Indigenous peoples, Francophones, and ultimately, all minorities.

**SATURDAY**

**APRIL 13**

7:30 PM

**WEDNESDAY**

**APRIL 17**

7:00 PM

**FRIDAY**

**APRIL 19**

7:30 PM

**THE SEXY THRILLER THAT SEDUCES  
THE AUDIENCE WITH EVERY NOTE**

Carmen can have any man she wants, and discards them as easily as she does the cigarettes she makes. When she seduces the proud young soldier Don José only to cast him aside for the handsome bullfighter, jealousy ignites. José is pushed to the brink. Carmen's tragic fate has been sealed.

Who can resist the sensuous music of *Carmen*? With its lavish score, brilliant orchestration, and Spanish rhythms, you will be powerless to resist the hit melodies and beloved music of the most popular opera of all time.

Features some of the most recognizable music including Carmen's smoky Habanera, Don José's Flower Song, and the rousing Toreador Song.

*Sung in French with French dialogue; projected English translations.*

**MUSIC** Georges Bizet

**LIBRETTO** Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy  
(Based on the story of the same name by French novelist Prosper Mérimée.)



**Carmen**  
Ginger  
Costa-Jackson



**Don José**  
David Pomeroy



**Escamillo**  
Daniel Okulitch



**Micaëla**  
Lara Ciekiewicz



**Conductor**  
Tyrone Paterson



**Director**  
Brian Deedrick



**"Ginger Costa-Jackson is Opera's  
Latest Sexiest Carmen"**

– *Forkingseattlecom*  
(Seattle Opera)

**"Her downward tones were exquisite, and  
they became multicolored jewels as they  
spun out over the audience."**

– *Opera Wire*  
(San Diego Opera)

Ginger Costa-Jackson as Carmen in the 2019 Seattle Opera production. Photo: Sunny Martini

**AN IRRESISTIBLE  
THEATRICAL EVENT!**

*Carmen*

# 2023/24 SEASON PRESENTED BY



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LI KEUR: RIEL'S HEART OF THE NORTH

UNDERWRITTEN BY



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DIGITAL EMERGING ARTISTS  
PROGRAM SUPPORTER



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