

MANITOBA
OPERA | 50
SING A NEW STORY

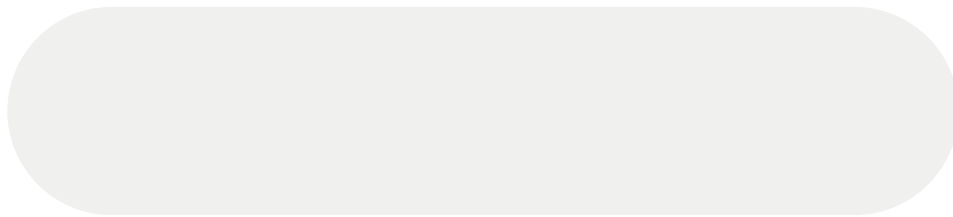


2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT



OUR MISSION:

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

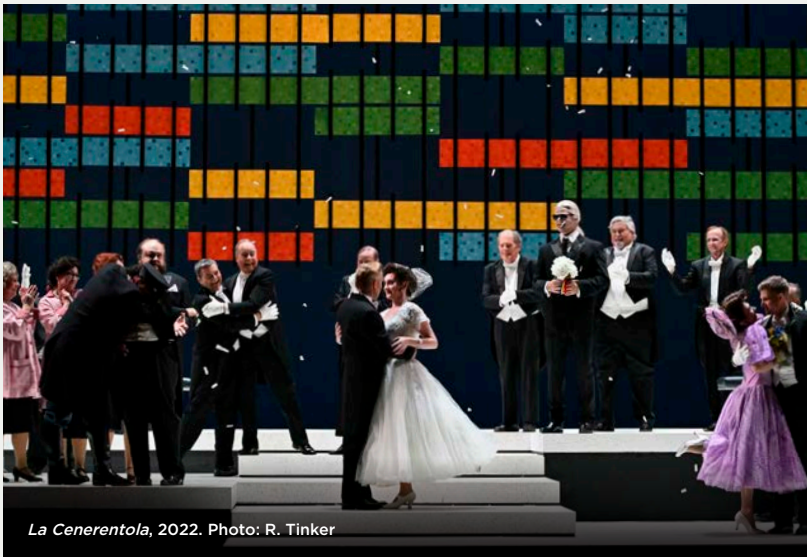


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



La Cenerentola, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker



Così fan tutte, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

The 2022/23 season was a milestone season for Manitoba Opera, marking 50 years of making opera in our community. Clearly much has changed since those intrepid beginnings in 1972, when in true Winnipeg spirit, a group of people came together to lay the foundation of a company that has developed its own prairie magic.

We used our anniversary season to celebrate the past, acknowledging the many wonderful productions and people in our history; to look to the future, marking the advancements of the art form; and to thank the community by acknowledging those who have gone above and beyond to turn a fledging enterprise into one of Canada's most important regional opera companies.

A 50th anniversary planning committee consisting of board members and staff was created to develop events to mark this special year in the company's history. What follows are highlights of an amazing and rewarding year.

The first event of the season was a luncheon hosted by former Mayor Brian Bowman at City Hall where he presented Manitoba Opera with an Organization Community Service Award in recognition of the company's contribution to the artistic life of the community.

In August, we held our third Digital Emerging Artists Program (DEAP), a four-week online program designed to help emerging opera artists step into the next stage of their careers.

New to the program this year was the addition of an Independent Learner stream for a BIPOC artist – an artist early in their career who would benefit from instruction from the core faculty.

In September, we launched a new initiative to give post-secondary music students an opportunity to experience working at an opera company. Nine students from the University of Manitoba and Canadian Mennonite University were selected to participate in the program in conjunction with the mainstage productions. These student ambassadors worked at performances and events introducing speakers, helping at the photo wall and souvenir table, and meeting the artists.

This season, Manitoba Opera added two videos to its Opera Storytime collection that feature American Sign Language translations which were prepared and presented by Deaf American Sign Language translator Joanna Hawkins. With the guidance of Kelsey Lanaghan, Ojibway Language Teacher with Louis Riel School Division, John McLean, Language & Technology Developer, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc., translated the text and read in Ojibway for two additional Opera Storytime videos. This project was generously supported by Canada Life, Councillor Brian Mayes and the City of Winnipeg, and Payworks.

In October, we made the exciting announcement of the lead gifts to the A. Kerr Twaddle Robert H. Thorlakson Manitoba Opera Endowment Fund, including the company's first \$1M gift from Gail

Asper. The campaign, co-chaired by Elba Haid and Judith Chambers, has hit the \$3.5M mark of our \$10M goal.

The mainstage season opened in November with *La Cenerentola*, reset to the 1950s with an homage to haute couture. Postponed from the spring of 2022 due to Omicron, *La Cenerentola* provided just the right sparkle to kick off our 50th season. The season was specifically planned with two comedic operas to welcome the audience back into the opera house. Director Rob Herriot directed a lively production, with Lizzy Hoyt making a spectacular debut in the title role.

On opening night, we recognized the contributions of several former chairs and presidents of the Board of Trustees at a pre-show dinner. Strong boards come from strong leaders and the commitment of these individuals, along with presidents before them, have brought Manitoba Opera to this milestone year. We are deeply appreciative of their commitment.

This season also marks the first year of our participation in the Women in Musical Leadership (WML) program. WML is a three-year program led by Tapestry Opera that is designed



Soprano Hiromi Omura and baritone Gregory Dahl, 50th Anniversary Concert, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

to collectively develop the next generation of female and non-binary conductors and music directors in Canada. This year, we were pleased to welcome Maria Fuller as WML Assistant Conductor for our production of *La Cenerentola* in November and Juliane Gallant as WML Assistant Conductor for our production of *Così fan tutte* in April.

Throughout the year, we celebrated the company with a social media campaign: 50 Weeks of Opera, sharing a bit of Manitoba Opera history and highlighting our activities in the community. For example, staff teamed up with the 31st Pathfinders GGC and the 350th Rangers GGC in the 2022 holiday



Così fan tutte, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

season to help a family of nine with a hamper of food and gifts through Peg City Kindness Crew Inc.

In late winter, we participated in the Opera Resilience Program through the Association for Opera in Canada. Five young artists received short-term employment placements with Manitoba Opera to aid in skills development in the areas of social media, community engagement, education, development, and event planning.

In celebration of 50 years of presenting opera in the community, we hosted our 50th Season Anniversary Concert on the very same weekend as that concert back in February 1972. As a nod to that first concert event, the 50th season concert featured excerpts from *Il Trovatore* in the first half and a mixed-repertoire program of operatic highlights in the second half.

The evening started with a pre-show reception to honour 50 people and organizations who've made extraordinary contributions to Manitoba Opera's success. Post-concert, we



inducted 10 choristers who each have performed in more than 50 operas into the newly created Manitoba Opera Chorus Hall of Fame.

In March, The Honourable Anita Neville, P.C., O.M., Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, hosted an event at Government House to honour the Manitoba Opera Chorus for their vital contribution to the success of the company's past five decades. The evening included an address from Her Honour, as well as comments from Board of Trustees Chair Judith Chambers, followed by a light supper.

In April, we were excited to announce that our 2023/24 season would include a new opera, *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* with libretto by Suzanne Steele and co-composed by Alex Kusturok and Neil Weisensel. The opera celebrates Métis women, language, and culture.

Our mainstage season concluded with an updated and entirely homegrown production of Mozart's comedy *Così fan tutte* reset from the Bay of Naples in the 18th century to a piano bar in a luxury hotel on the cusp of the

Canadian wilderness in the early 1930s. Conceived and designed by Manitoba Opera Director of Production Sheldon Johnson and directed by Winnipeg's Rob Herriot, the production starred Tracy Dahl and David Watson, marking their milestone productions with the company.

On Sunday, May 28, Manitoba Opera hosted Mozart & Mimosas, an opera brunch. Nearly 200 guests gathered at The Leaf at Assiniboine Park to tour the biomes, enjoy a buffet, and hear live opera. Pink-themed floral arrangements added to the bright and festive atmosphere. Artists performed a selection of arias and duets by Mozart. This beautiful event was a fitting final celebration to cap off Manitoba Opera's 50th season anniversary.

In addition to all these highlights, we continued to offer a diverse range of educational and community engagement programs. Our service to the community is made possible through the work of our amazing staff, volunteers, and artists; generous donors and sponsors; and public funders. We offer our continued gratitude to all those who help make our work possible.





La Cenerentola, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker

“[LARA CIEKIEWICZ] PIERCED OUR HEARTS... HER CRYSTAL CLEAR SOPRANO AND ARTFULLY CONTROLLED DYNAMIC PALETTE FUELLING HER EXQUISITE, GOOSE-BUMP INDUCING ARTISTRY.”

The Free Press
50TH ANNIVERSARY
CONCERT, 2023



Soprano Lara Ciekiewicz, 50th Anniversary Concert, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker



Tenor James McLennan performing at the Mayor's Community Service Award Luncheon, 2022. Photo: C. Corneau



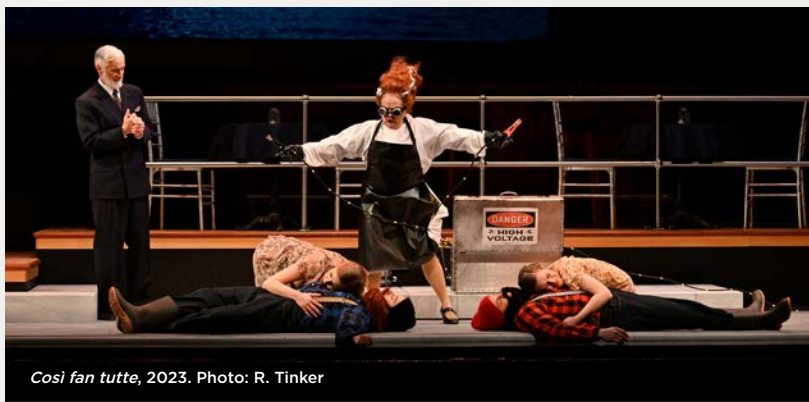
Soprano Nikita Silagy Labdon, bass-baritone Stephen Haiko-Pena, and pianist Lee Houghton Stewart at *Mozart & Mimosas*, 2023. Photo: L. Norman



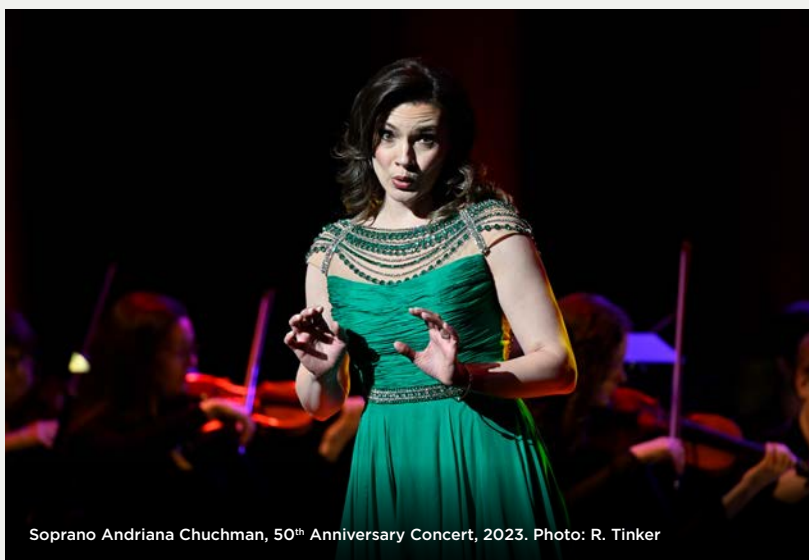
Patrons in the lobby at the 50th Anniversary Concert, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

ARTISTIC PROGRAMMING

After three years of cancellations and alternative programming due to COVID restrictions, Manitoba Opera's 50th Anniversary Season featured the much-anticipated return to presenting fully staged operas with world-class local, national, and international principal artists onstage, the amazing Manitoba Opera Chorus, the wonderful Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and capacity-sized audiences in the hall.



Cosi fan tutte, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker



Soprano Andriana Chuchman, 50th Anniversary Concert, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

PRODUCTION: *LA CENERENTOLA*

Postponed in the spring of 2022 due to a spike in COVID cases, our production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* finally made its way to the Centennial Concert Hall stage for three performances in November.

The opera is a retelling of the classic tale of Cinderella (Angelina) in which a young woman is forced to act as a servant to her mean stepfather (Don Magnifico) and two ungrateful stepsisters (Clorinda and Tisbe). When a prince arrives (in disguise) in search of a suitable bride, he is immediately charmed by Cenerentola. Later, at the ball, the prince is once again taken by Cenerentola, who enters the ball veiled. She gives the prince a bracelet and instructs him to find her. After a prolonged search, the prince finds Cenerentola at her home, back in servant's clothes. Cenerentola becomes the new princess and, even though her family had treated her cruelly, she forgives them and finds happiness with her new husband.

Reset to the 1950s and directed by Winnipeg's own Rob Herriot, the production featured period haute couture-inspired costumes by Edmonton Opera's resident designer, Deanna Finnman, and mid-century modern styled scenery (featuring some references to iconic Winnipeg modernist architecture) designed by Manitoba Opera's Director of Production, Sheldon Johnson.

The production featured the mainstage debut of Winnipeg mezzo-soprano Lizzy Hoyt (The



La Cenerentola cast and crew at the Opening Night Reception, 2022. Photo: L. Norman

Solo Sessions, 2021) in the title role, as well as the return of Edmonton tenor John Tessier (*Werther*, 2017) as the handsome prince. Canadian baritone Peter McGillivray (*Bartolo*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, 2014) appeared as the wicked stepfather, with Winnipeg soprano Andrea Lett (*Bertha*, *The Barber of Seville*, 2019) and Berlin-based Canadian mezzo Adanya Dunn (MO debut), appearing as the wicked stepsisters. Canadian baritone Nicholas Borg (MO debut) appeared as the prince's chauffeur, Dandini, and American bass Kirk Eichelberger (*Commendatore*, *Don Giovanni*, 2018) appeared as the magical (and fashionable) Alidoro. Manitoba Opera's Principal Conductor and Music Advisor, Tyrone Paterson, led the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and Chorus Director Tadeusz Biernacki, prepared the 16-voice men's chorus.

PRODUCTION: 50TH SEASON ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

In February of 1972, Manitoba Opera presented its first-ever homegrown opera event: a concert version of Verdi's *Il*

Trovatore featuring international soloists, the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir, and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

In February of 2023, in celebration of 50 years of presenting opera in the community, we hosted our 50th Season Anniversary Concert on the very same weekend as that concert back in 1972.

As a nod to that first concert event, the 50th season concert featured excerpts from *Il Trovatore* in the first half and a mixed-repertoire program of operatic highlights in the second half. A powerful quartet of singers brought *Il Trovatore* to life: Japanese soprano Hiromi Omura (*Cio-cio San*, *Madama Butterfly*, 2017), Bulgarian mezzo-soprano Nadia Krasteva (MO debut), Newfoundland tenor David Pomeroy (*Pinkerton*, *Madama Butterfly*, 2017) and Manitoba-born baritone Gregory Dahl (*Sharpless*, *Madama Butterfly*, 2017).

For the second half, these four singers returned with selections of their own, plus we heard arias from two Winnipeg-based artists: soprano Andriana Chuchman

(Susanna, *The Marriage of Figaro*, 2014) and soprano Lara Ciekiewicz (*Elle*, *La voix humaine*, 2021). The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra was led by Manitoba Opera's Principal Conductor and Music Advisor Tyrone Paterson, and Winnipeg-based artists Monica Huisman and James McLennan shared hosting duties.

The concert also featured selections by our own Manitoba Opera Chorus who were prepared by Chorus Director, Tadeusz Biernacki. During the concert, as part of the celebration, we recognized the contributions of 10 long-serving members of the chorus by inducting them into the newly created Manitoba Opera Chorus Hall of Fame (see page 35 for more information). Each of the chorus honourees were introduced onstage and received much-deserved applause.

PRODUCTION: *COSÌ FAN TUTTE*

In the spring of 2023, we closed our 50th Anniversary Season with an updated and entirely homegrown production of Mozart's comedy *Così fan tutte*.

Mozart's story takes place in the Bay of Naples in the 18th century. In our production, conceived and designed by Manitoba Opera Director of Production, Sheldon Johnson, and directed



(l to r) Kirk Eichelberger (Alidoro), John Tessier (Prince Ramiro), and Lizzy Hoyt (Angelina), *La Cenerentola*, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker

by Winnipeg’s Robert Herriot, the story was transported from an 18th century coffee house in Naples to a piano bar in a luxury hotel on the cusp of the Canadian wilderness in the early 1930s.

During the overture, we are introduced to two young Italian sisters, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, who have just arrived at their hotel while on vacation in Canada. They meet and fall head-over-heels in love with two dashing Mounties, Ferrando and Guglielmo. Convinced of women’s infidelity, the cynical Don Alfonso, aided by the hotel housekeeper, Despina, proposes a plan to the two officers: they tell their sweethearts they must leave immediately to answer the ‘call of duty,’ and then return in disguise, dressed not as Mozart’s Albanian soldiers, but as two plaid-shirted, waltzing log drivers who attempt to seduce the two sisters. At first, the girls reject their advances, but they soon allow themselves to be seduced by their bearded suitors, each selecting the other’s boyfriend as their new beau. In the process, these four young people learn valuable lessons in love and relationships, bringing meaning to the opera’s alternate title, *The School for Lovers*.

Appearing in the roles of the two Italian sisters were Canadian soprano Jamie Groot (MO

debut), and Canadian mezzo-soprano Danielle MacMillan (MO debut). Canadian tenor Jean-Philippe Lazure (MO debut) and Canadian baritone Johnathon Kirby (Ben, *The Telephone*, 2021) sang the roles of the two young Mounties. Also appearing were two Winnipeg artists celebrating the 40th anniversaries of their respective Manitoba Opera debuts: as Don Alfonso, marking his 45th appearance with the company, we welcomed baritone, David Watson (Elder McLean, *Susannah*, 2019) and as Despina, we welcomed the remarkable Tracy Dahl (Gilda, *Rigoletto*, 2012). The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra was once again conducted by Manitoba Opera’s Principal Conductor and

Music Advisor Tyrone Paterson, and the 16-voice mixed chorus was prepared by Chorus Director Tadeusz Biernacki.

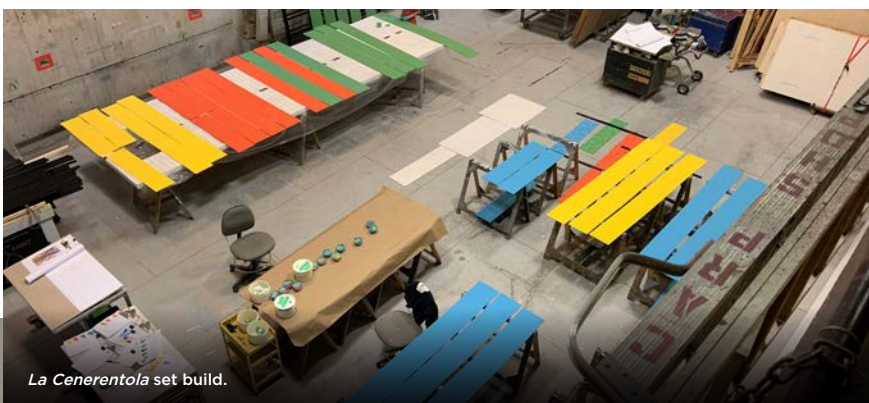
Throughout the last 50 years, Manitoba Opera has proudly developed relationships with many of North America’s finest artists. Moving forward, we will continue to offer exciting opportunities to both established and emerging artists. Manitoba Opera’s Production Department strives to maintain an environment where these artists can do their very best work. The company is honored to present these artists to the community, and to continue to bring great stories - told through beautiful music - to life.

“LIZZY HOYT DAZZLED IN THE TITLE ROLE... WHOLLY BELIEVABLE, DEEP HUMANITY, WHILE TOSSING OFF HER SPARKLING COLORATURA PASSAGES”

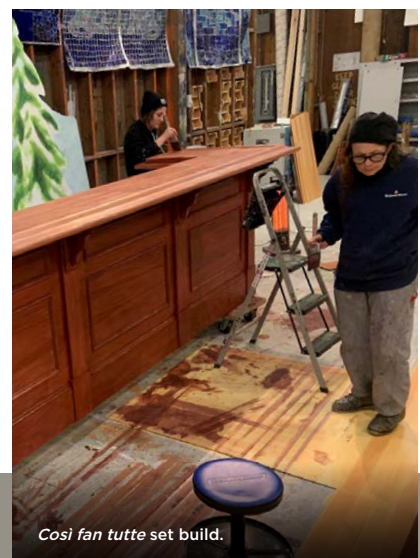
The Free Press
LA CENERENTOLA, 2022



Adanya Dunn (Tisbe), Andrea Lett (Clorinda), and Peter McGillivray (Don Magnifico), *La Cenerentola*, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker



La Cenerentola set build.



Cosi fan tutte set build.

NEW LOGO UNVEILED AS PART OF 50TH SEASON LAUNCH

A new visual identity for the company was launched in June 2022 as part of the kick-off of the 50th anniversary season.

“We felt that the 50th anniversary season was a great time to launch a new look for the company with a reimagined logo and brand concept,” explained Larry

Desrochers, General Director & CEO.

The company worked with McKim Communications Group on the re-design of the logo and brand identity. The two organizations have a long-standing relationship, as McKim has been the design team behind Manitoba Opera’s

brand and creative for a number of years.

The new visual identity celebrates the power of voice and has a very contemporary, forward-looking feel. It features references to sound and how the company has resonated year after year, music, nature, and humanity.

“We are excited about the company’s new look and the energy it exudes and feel that it will have a broad appeal to a diverse range of people,” added Desrochers.





LA
Cenerentola
CINDERELLA

SUNG IN ITALIAN

MUSIC BY
Gioacchino Rossini

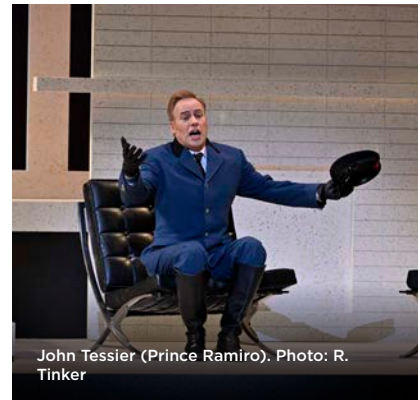
LIBRETTO BY
Jacopo Ferretti

BASED ON
Charles Guillaume Etienne's
French libretto, *Cendrillon*,
for operas by Niccolò Isouard
and Daniel Steibelt

NOVEMBER 12, 15, 18 | 2022



Lizzy Hoyt (Angelina). Photo: R. Tinker



John Tessier (Prince Ramiro). Photo: R. Tinker



La Cenerentola. Photo: R. Tinker



Kirk Eichelberger (Alidoro). Photo: R. Tinker

PRINCIPAL CAST (IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)

CLORINDA <i>Don Magnifico's daughter</i>	Andrea Lett
TISBE <i>his other daughter</i>	Adanya Dunn*
ANGELINA (OR CENERENTOLA) <i>his stepdaughter</i>	Lizzy Hoyt*
ALIDORO <i>advisor to the Prince</i>	Kirk Eichelberger
DON MAGNIFICO <i>a man of some wealth</i>	Peter McGillivray
DON RAMIRO <i>a handsome Prince</i>	John Tessier
DANDINI <i>his valet</i>	Nicholas Borg*

SCENERY DESIGN BY	Sheldon Johnson
COSTUME DESIGN BY	Deanna Finman (for Edmonton Opera)
LIGHTING DESIGN BY	Scott Henderson
SCENERY AND PROPS CONSTRUCTED BY	Scenic Elements (Winnipeg MB)
COSTUMES PROVIDED BY	Edmonton Opera
STAGE MANAGER	Robert Pel
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS	Kathryn Ball Heather Lee Brereton
PROJECTED TITLES BY	Sheldon Johnson

Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra musician listing on page 14.

MANITOBA OPERA CHORUS

TENOR	BASS
Russ Foster	David Boyes
Michal Kowalik	Chris Caslake
George Nytepchuk	James Dutton
J Craig Oliphant	Max Fingerote
Lawrence Pauls	Paul Forget
Richard Ryland	Neil Grewar
Lorenz Sarrondo	Don Larsen
Raymond Sokalski	Dan Szymanski

SUPERNUMERARIES

Joanne Kilfoyle
Ashley Kowalchuk
Megan Krohn

PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION	Sheldon Johnson
CHORUS MASTER/ RÉPÉTITEUR	Tadeusz Biernacki
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR	Maria Fuller
APPRENTICE STAGE MANAGER	Jazz Marcelino
CHORUS REHEARSAL PIANIST	Cary Denby Lee Houghton Stewart
WARDROBE SUPERVISOR	Alena Zharska
WARDROBE CO-ORDINATOR	Heather Thorleifson
WARDROBE ALTERATIONS	Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet
HAIR/WIG DESIGNER	Jill Buhr
HAIR/WIG ASSISTANT	Adrianna Oliphant
MAKE-UP DESIGNER	Christian Hadley
MAKE-UP ASSISTANT	Jean-Marc Lafond
MAKE-UP CREW	Kierra LeBleu Sarah Leighton Theresa Thomson
PROJECTED TITLES CUEING	Cary Denby

SET AND PROPS CONSTRUCTION

MASTER CARPENTER	Brent Letain
ASSISTANT CARPENTER	Chris Seida
SCENIC CARPENTERS	Jacko Garcia Steven Vande Vyvere
HEAD SCENIC ARTIST	Carla Schroeder
SCENIC PAINTERS	Stephanie Porrior Melissa Smigelski

**CENTENNIAL CONCERT HALL
PRODUCTION STAFF**

STAGE MANAGER	Dave Martin
STAGE ELECTRICIAN	Brian Mann
SOUND TECHNICIAN	Glen Jonatchick
STAGE CREW/ WARDROBE DRESSERS	I.A.T.S.E. Local #63

*MANITOBA OPERA MAINSTAGE DEBUT



Peter McGillivray (Don Magnifico), Andrea Lett (Clorinda), and Adanya Dunn (Tisbe). Photo: R. Tinker

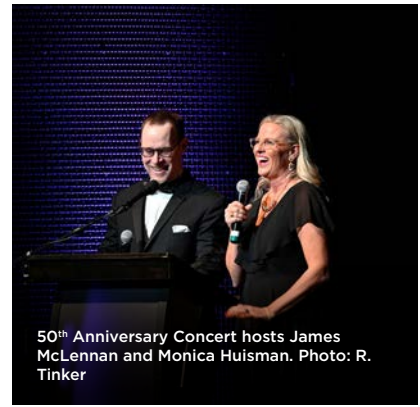
“THIS OPERA TURNED MY IDEAS ABOUT
OPERA AS SUCH UPSIDE DOWN.
IT WAS SOMETHING INCREDIBLE!”

I. Klimenko, patron
LA CENERENTOLA, 2022

50TH

ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

FEBRUARY 25 | 2023



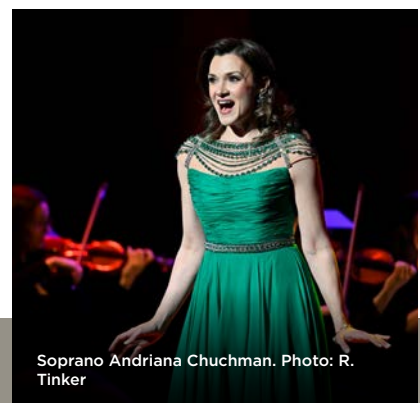
50th Anniversary Concert hosts James McLennan and Monica Huisman. Photo: R. Tinker



Tenor David Pomeroy. Photo: R. Tinker



Mezzo-Soprano Nadia Krasteva. Photo: R. Tinker



Soprano Andriana Chuchman. Photo: R. Tinker

ARTISTS

LARA CIEKIEWICZ
ANDRIANA CHUCHMAN
GREGORY DAHL
NADIA KRASTEVA*
HIROMI OMURA
DAVID POMEROY

MANITOBA OPERA CHORUS
WINNIPEG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR Tyrone Paterson
HOSTS Monica Huisman
James McLennan

PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

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STAGE MANAGER Robert Pel
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS Kathryn Ball
Heather Lee Brereton
PROJECTED TITLES BY Sheldon Johnson
CHORUS MASTER/RÉPÉTITEUR Tadeusz Biernacki
CHORUS REHEARSAL PIANIST Cary Denby

**CENTENNIAL CONCERT HALL
PRODUCTION STAFF**

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STAGE ELECTRICIAN Brian Mann
SOUND TECHNICIAN Glen Jonatchick
**STAGE CREW/
WARDROBE DRESSERS** I.A.T.S.E. Local #63

Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra musician listing on page 14.

MANITOBA OPERA CHORUS**SOPRANO**

Michelle Allard
Janine Brémault-Bamford
Linda Feasby
Deborah Ginther
Kadri Irwin
Olivia Kang
Joanne Kilfoyle
Katherine Mayba
Marlise Ritchie
Cathy Wach-Dueck

TENOR

Russ Foster
Donald Hodgson
Kyler Humble
Peter Klymkiw
Michal Kowalik
Rick MacLowick
Tim Magas
George Nytepchuk
Richard Ryland
Lorenz Sarrondo
Raymond Sokalski
Adam von Lau

MEZZO

Kelley Fry
Kathy Gawlik
Celoris Miller
Agata Ploszanski
Christina Pyrz-Kowall
Mavis Ritchie
Nikita Silagy
Karla Weir

BASS

David Boyes
Steve Denby
James Dutton
Max Fingerote
Jayden Fraser
Zygmunt Galazka
Costas Ginakis
Neil Grewar
Don Larsen
Craig Oliphant
Lukas Sawatzky
Dan Szymanski

*MANITOBA OPERA MAINSTAGE DEBUT



50th Anniversary Concert. Photo: R. Tinker

“DAVID POMEROY
BROUGHT THE HOUSE
DOWN WITH HIS
SCORCHED EARTH
PERFORMANCE OF
PUCCINI’S ‘NESSUN
DORMA’...”

The Free Press
50TH ANNIVERSARY
CONCERT, 2023



COSÌ *fan* TUTTE

THE SCHOOL FOR LOVERS

MUSIC BY
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

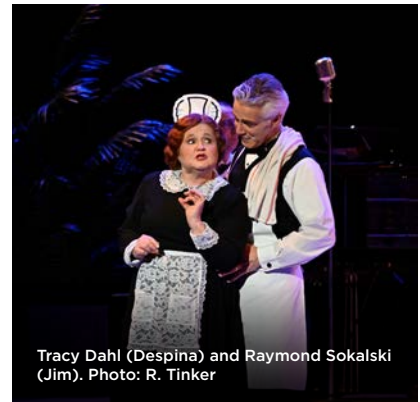
LIBRETTO BY
Lorenzo Da Ponte

SUNG IN ITALIAN

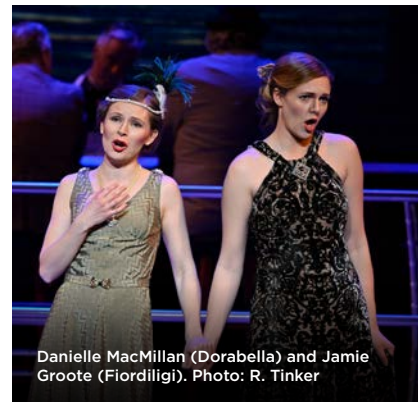
APRIL 22, 25, 28 | 2023



(l to r) Jean-Philippe Lazure (Ferrando), David Watson (Don Alphonso), and Johnathon Kirby (Guglielmo). Photo: R. Tinker



Tracy Dahl (Despina) and Raymond Sokalski (Jim). Photo: R. Tinker



Danielle MacMillan (Dorabella) and Jamie Groote (Fiordiligi). Photo: R. Tinker



Johnathon Kirby (Guglielmo) and Jean-Philippe Lazure (Ferrando). Photo: R. Tinker

PRINCIPAL CAST (IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE)**FERRANDO** *a dashing Mountie (in love with Dorabella)* Jean-Philippe Lazure***GUGLIELMO** *likewise (in love with Fiordiligi)* Johnathon Kirby**DON ALFONSO** *a gentleman philosopher* David Watson**FIORDILIGI** *a young Italian on vacation in Canada* Jamie Groote***DORABELLA** *her sister* Danielle MacMillan***DESPINA** *the hotel housekeeper* Tracy Dahl

ALSO APPEARING:

SAM *the hotel piano player* Tadeusz Biernacki**JIM** *the hotel bartender* Raymond Sokalski**PRODUCTION CONCEIVED AND DESIGNED BY** Sheldon Johnson**LIGHTING DESIGNED BY** Scott Henderson**SCENERY AND PROPS CONSTRUCTED BY** Scenic Elements (Winnipeg MB)**COSTUMES PROVIDED BY** Harlequin Costumes (Winnipeg MB)
Stratford Festival**STAGE MANAGER** Robert Pel**ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS** Kathryn Ball
Heather Lee Brereton**PROJECTED TITLES BY** Sheldon Johnson*Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra musician listing on page 14.***MANITOBA OPERA CHORUS****SOPRANO**

Kadri Irwin

Olivia Kang

Katherine Mayba

Kasia Swintak

MEZZO

Micheline Hay

Christina Pyrz-Kowall

Mavis Ritchie

Karla Weir

TENOR

Russ Foster

Michal Kowalik

George Nytepchuk

Raymond Sokalski

BASS

David Boyes

James Dutton

Max Fingerote

Don Larsen

PRODUCTION PERSONNEL**DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION** Sheldon Johnson**CHORUS MASTER/ RÉPÉTITEUR** Tadeusz Biernacki**ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR** Juliane Gallant**PRODUCTION ASSISTANT** Tia Morann**CHORUS REHEARSAL PIANIST** Cary Denby**WARDROBE SUPERVISORS** Jan Malabar
Alena Zharska**WARDROBE ALTERATIONS** Harlequin Costumes
Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet**HAIR/WIG DESIGNER** Jill Buhr**HAIR/WIG ASSISTANT** Adrianna Oliphant**HAIR CREW** Laura Warren**MAKE-UP DESIGNER** Christian Hadley**MAKE-UP ASSISTANT** Theresa Thomson**MAKE-UP CREW** Erica Hastings
Jean-Marc Lafond
Sarah Mojelsky**SLIDE GRAPHICS** Greg Gardner**PROJECTED TITLES CUEING** Michelle Murre**SET AND PROPS CONSTRUCTION****MASTER CARPENTER** Brent Letain**ASSISTANT CARPENTER** Ed Preston**SCENIC CARPENTERS** Liam Shattuck
Claude Robert**HEAD SCENIC ARTIST** Julie Slessor**SCENIC PAINTER** Alex Reimer**CENTENNIAL CONCERT HALL
PRODUCTION STAFF****STAGE MANAGER** Dave Martin**STAGE ELECTRICIAN** Brian Mann**SOUND TECHNICIAN** Glen Jonatchick**STAGE CREW/
WARDROBE DRESSERS** I.A.T.S.E. Local #63

* MANITOBA OPERA MAINSTAGE DEBUT

“MOZART WOULD HAVE APPROVED OF THIS PRODUCTION AND BEEN LAUGHING ALONG WITH THE AUDIENCE! LOVED THE ENDING.”

Patron
COSÌ FAN TUTTE, 2023



Così fan tutte. Photo: R. Tinker

WINNIPEG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2022/23

FIRST VIOLIN

Gwen Hoebig
CONCERTMASTER
The Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté Memorial Chair, endowed by the Eckhardt-Gramatté Foundation

Karl Stobbe
ASSOCIATE CONCERTMASTER

Jeff Dyrda
ASSISTANT CONCERTMASTER

Mona Coarda
 Tara Fensom
 Hong Tian Jia
 Mary Lawton
 Sonia Lazar
 Julie Savard
 Jun Shao
 Erika Sloos ★
 Rebecca Weger**

SECOND VIOLIN

Chris Anstey
PRINCIPAL

Elation Pauls
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Karen Bauch
 Kristina Bauch
 Elizabeth Dyer
 Bokyoung Hwang*
 Rodica Jeffrey
 Momoko Matsumura**
 Susan McCallum
 Takayo Noguchi
 Jane Radomski

VIOLA

Elise Lavallée
ACTING PRINCIPAL

Dmytro Kreshchenskyi**
ACTING ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Marie-Elyse Badeau
 Laszlo Baroczi
 Richard Bauch
 Greg Hay
 Micahela Kleer ★
 Michael Scholz

CELLO

Yuri Hooker
PRINCIPAL

Emma Quackenbush
ACTING ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Grace An**
 Arlene Dahl
 Samuel Nadurak**
 Alyssa Ramsay
 Sean Taubner

BASS

Meredith Johnson
PRINCIPAL

Emily Krajewski**
 James McMillan
 Daniel Perry
 Eric Timperman

FLUTE

Jan Kocman
PRINCIPAL
Supported by Gordon & Audrey Fogg

Alex Conway

OBOE

Beverly Wang
PRINCIPAL

Robin MacMillan
 Caitlin Brom-Jacobs ★
 Tracy Wright ♣ ★

CLARINET

Micah Heilbrunn
PRINCIPAL

Sharon Atkinson ♣
 Graham Lord ★
 Tom Weston ★

BASSOON

Kathryn Brooks*
PRINCIPAL

Mark Kreshchenskyi**
ACTING PRINCIPAL

Allen Harrington ★
 Elizabeth Mee**

HORN

Patricia Evans
PRINCIPAL

Ken MacDonald
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
The Hilda Schelberger Memorial Chair

Aiden Kleer
 Caroline Oberheue
 Michiko Singh
 Micajah Sturgess ★

TRUMPET

Chris Fensom
PRINCIPAL

Paul Jeffrey
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

Isaac Pulford
The Patty Kirk Memorial Chair

Justine Auger ★
 Dean Pollard ★

TROMBONE

Steven Dyer
PRINCIPAL
The Stuart Bremner Memorial Chair

Keith Dyrda
 Isabelle Lavoie**

TUBA

Justin Gruber

TIMPANI

Andrew Nazer**
ACTING PRINCIPAL

PERCUSSION

Andrew Johnson
PRINCIPAL

Caroline Bucher ★

HARP

Richard Turner
PRINCIPAL
Endowed by W.H. & S.E. Loewen

PIANO

Tadeusz Biernacki ♣ ★

ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

Isaac Pulford
MANAGER

Michaela Kleer
MUSIC LIBRARIAN

* On Leave

** One Year Appointment

★ **50th Anniversary Concert Only**

♣ **Così fan tutte Only**



Music Advisor and Principal Conductor Tyrone Paterson and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, 50th Anniversary Concert, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

COMPANY BECOMES A PARTNER IN THE WOMEN IN MUSICAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

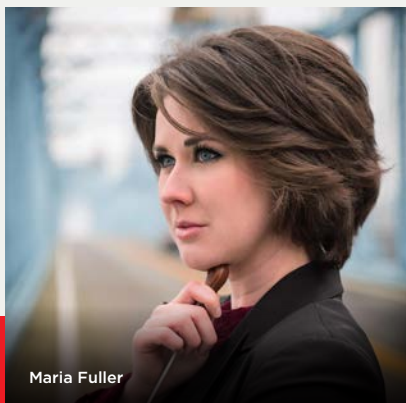
Manitoba Opera was proud to become a partner in the Women in Musical Leadership (WML) program this season and join in the work to nurture the development of female and non-binary conductors. Currently, less than three percent of music director positions in Canadian orchestras are occupied by Canadian women.

As a program partner, Manitoba Opera has committed to offering mentorship in this program through to the 2024/25 season. This year, we were pleased to welcome Maria Fuller as WML Assistant Conductor for our production of *La Cenerentola* in November and Juliane Gallant as WML Assistant Conductor for our production of *Così fan tutte* in April.

WML is a three-year program led by Tapestry Opera that is

designed to collectively develop the next generation of female and non-binary conductors and music directors in Canada. WML provides conductors the opportunity to assist, observe, conduct, and build experience within a range of organizations in symphonic, chamber, operatic, and contemporary repertoire. This provides conductors with the professional experience and training that will enable them to take the podium anywhere in the world.

“This fellowship has given me the opportunity to work alongside and learn from so many companies across Canada. The experiences here have shown me new ways to explore my craft and completely transformed the trajectory of my career.”
 – Juliane Gallant, WML Year One Conductor



Maria Fuller



Juliane Gallant

MANITOBA OPERA GIVES BACK

PROVIDING A HELPING HAND

MO staff teamed up with the 31st Pathfinders GGC and the 350th Rangers GGC in the 2022 holiday season to help a family of nine with a hamper of food and gifts through Peg City Kindness Crew Inc.

Manitoba Opera also organizes donation drives at performances, and through the generosity of patrons, is able to collect supplies for those less fortunate in our community.



Items contributed by patrons to the Kindness Kits Drive held during the run of *La Cenerentola*.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

More than 11,000 people experienced community engagement events, initiatives and exhibits during the 2022/23 season, including activities surrounding our mainstage productions and 50th Anniversary Season special initiatives.



Dr. Colette Simonot-Maiello presents the *Così fan tutte* Understanding the Music lecture.



Student Ambassador Ashley Schneberger introduces pre-show chat speaker Rob Herriot.

LA CENERENTOLA UNDERSTANDING THE MUSIC

Dr. James Maiello, Associate Dean for Graduate Programs & Research and Associate Professor of Musicology, Desautels Faculty of Music, University of Manitoba, gave a lecture about the music of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, with a specific focus on the intricately crafted ensemble scenes.

Dr. Maiello discussed the composer's use of vocal technique and orchestration to deliver crystal-clear text despite the busy tangle of activity with many singers performing overlapping lines simultaneously. This event was held at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights classroom on Saturday, October 22.

OPERA PRIMER

Dr. Scott Miller, Education & Community Engagement Coordinator, Manitoba Opera, presented a lecture on the characters and synopsis of *La Cenerentola* complete with video examples and details on the new staging of the opera, as well as what to listen to and watch for in this new envisioning. This event was held at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights classroom on Sunday, October 30.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Beyond Cinderella & *The Brady Bunch*

Therapists Carolyn Klassen and Ellie Jack presented a discussion followed by a Q&A about stepfamilies. They discussed how stepfamilies have often been idolized or demonized in traditional and popular culture, and shared strategies and



principles from their experience as family therapists to better understand the challenge of bringing two families together.

The discussion touched on topics such as changing the language that is used and understanding roles and priorities of each parent. This event was presented in a hybrid format, streamed online and with a live audience at Centennial Concert Hall (Sound Bites Room) on Sunday, October 23.

PRE-SHOW CHATS

A half-hour before curtain at each performance of *La Cenerentola*, stage director Rob Herriot gave a 20-minute talk about the show including the non-traditional staging of the work set in the 1950s.

1950s DANCE DEMONSTRATION

During intermission at each performance, members of Studioworks Players dance troupe demonstrated popular dances from the 1950s and invited patrons to try out a few steps.

1950s FASHION DISPLAY

Displays were set up in the Centennial Concert Hall lobby

showcasing fashion from the 1950s. This exhibit was curated by the Costume Museum of Canada.

Patrons were also invited to come to the show dressed in 1950's fashion.

KINDNESS KITS DONATION DRIVE

In recognition of Angelina's (the main character in *La Cenerentola*) unflinching capacity for kindness, Manitoba Opera invited patrons to join the company in showing some kindness to community members who need a hand.

At each performance of *La Cenerentola*, volunteers collected donations of clothing and necessities which were delivered to Main Street Project, Siloam Mission, and Lighthouse Mission.

COSÌ FAN TUTTE UNDERSTANDING THE MUSIC

Dr. Colette Simonot-Maiello, Associate Professor of Musicology, Desautels Faculty of Music, University of Manitoba, lectured on the music of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, which is widely considered to contain some of the composer's most brilliant operatic writing.



Dr. Simonot-Maiello underscored how Mozart's music illustrates both the individual attitudes of the characters as well as the dynamics of their relationships. This event was held at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights classroom on Saturday, April 1.

OPERA PRIMER

Ritchie Diggs (Digital Emerging Artists Program Independent Learner, 2022) gave a lecture on the characters and synopsis of *Così fan tutte*, examining Lorenzo Da Ponte's libretto through the lens of enlightenment philosophy. In doing so, Ritchie encouraged his audience to consider the nuances of the opera's subtitle *The School for Lovers* when they attended the production. This event was held at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights classroom on Sunday, April 16.





Student Ambassador Emily Myers introducing pre-show chat speaker Rob Herriot.



Refugees from Ukraine who were able to take advantage of complimentary tickets through the Opera Access Program.

PRE-SHOW CHATS

Stage director Rob Herriot gave a 20-minute talk about the show prior to each performance, discussing Manitoba Opera’s new creation of a Canuck-style *Così*.

ART EXHIBITION: Mozart’s Music to Art

Winnipeg-based artist Ryan Smoluk received funding through Mainly Mozart and the Winnipeg Arts Council to produce a series of paintings based on the operas of Mozart, which were exhibited on the Centennial Concert Hall Piano Nobile during the run of *Così fan tutte*.

Ryan is an artist with autism who graduated from the University of Manitoba’s School of Art with a Diploma in Art degree in 2012. He spoke about his artwork and inspiration to attendees at Student Night at the Opera and during intermission at each performance.

FILM SCREENING: *Mozart on Tour*

Patrons were treated to a free screening of two episodes from the 1991 PBS documentary series *Mozart on Tour* hosted by conductor and pianist André Previn. The two episodes centered on Mozart’s life during the period of his collaboration with librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte, which resulted in some of his most celebrated operas: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*. This film screening took place on Saturday, April 15 at Cinematheque.

NATIONAL FILM BOARD LECTURE

The visual aesthetic of our production of *Così fan tutte* was informed in part by the well-known animated film, *The Log Driver’s Waltz*. In tribute to this, Manitoba Opera hosted a lunch-hour virtual presentation about the history and activities of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).

NFB English Collections Curator Camilo Martin-Florez shared several historic examples of Canadian film and animation including the iconic *The Log Driver’s Waltz* and discussed the NFB’s new browsable video archive. This presentation took place on Wednesday, April 19.

“...ANDREA LETT LIT UP THE STAGE, WHOSE CLORINDA SHOWCASED HER CONFIDENT, PITCH-PERFECT VOICE (NOT TO MENTION RAZOR-SHARP ACTING CHOPS) MATCHED EQUALLY BY ADANYA DUNN AS HER SISTERLY COUNTERPART.”

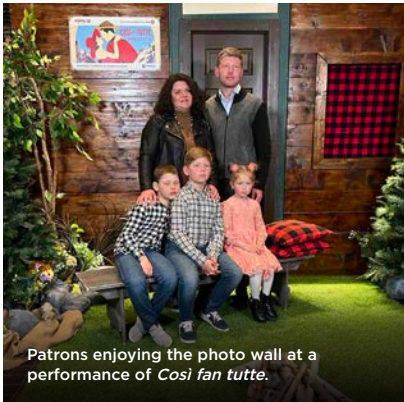
The Free Press
LA CENERENTOLA, 2022



1950s fashion vignette curated by the Costume Museum of Canada on display during the run of *La Cenerentola*.



Ritchie Diggs presents the *Cosi fan tutte* Opera Primer.



Patrons enjoying the photo wall at a performance of *Cosi fan tutte*.



Ryan Smoluk and one of his pieces from his Mozart's Music to Art exhibit on the Piano Nobile during the run of *Cosi fan tutte*.

“THE INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED SINGER (TRACY DAHL) AT THE TOP OF HER GAME...HELD NOTHING BACK, HER CRYSTALLINE, THREE-OCTAVE VOICE IMMEDIATELY SHOWCASED...”
The Free Press
COSÌ FAN TUTTE, 2023



(l to r) Staff members Camilla Christophersen, Tania Douglas, Joanna Loepp Thiessen (OAR placement), Liz Miller, and Ashley Boychuk. Photo: L. Norman

OPERA ACCESS PROGRAM

Each season Manitoba Opera donates tickets to social service agencies for clients who might not otherwise be able to attend a performance.

In 2022/23, Manitoba Opera distributed 470 complimentary tickets: 97 to *La Cenerentola*, 45 to the 50th Anniversary Concert, and 328 to *Cosi fan tutte*.

The 19 organizations receiving tickets included Pikangikum First Nation, Opportunities for Employment, Trailblazers Life Choices, a group of Ukrainian refugees through the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, Native Women's Transition Centre, Ikayuqtiit (Manitoba Inuit Association), Turning Leaf Support Services, Canadian Mental Health Association, Broadway Neighbourhood Centre, Ka Ni Kanichhk, Age & Opportunity, Blue Thunderbird Family Care Centre, Aboriginal School of Dance, Urban Circle Training Centre, Marymound Winnipeg, Sunshine House, and North Point Douglas Women's Centre.

Manitoba Opera also donated 38 tickets to non-profit organizations for their fundraising activities in the community.

STUDENT PROGRAMMING

This season, approximately 2,000 students experienced opera through Student Night at the Opera, in-class opera workshops, and online opera content, many of them for the first time.

INSPIRING THE CHILDREN OF TODAY

TO CREATE THE AUDIENCES OF TOMORROW



Students at the dress rehearsal for *Così fan tutte*. Photo: C. Corneau

STUDENT NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Student Night at the Opera is an opportunity for youth and post-secondary students to attend the final dress rehearsal before opening night of each of our productions at a greatly reduced ticket price. This season 479 students from 28 schools and youth organizations in the province attended Student Night dress rehearsals for *La Cenerentola* (November 10) and *Così fan tutte* (April 20).

BEEP

In summer 2022, soprano Katherine Mayba presented six hands-on opera learning workshops for students enrolled in Seven Oaks School Division's Balanced Experiential Education Program (B.E.E.P.). These 45-minute workshops were held at Victory School, O. V. Jewitt School, and Governor Semple School during the Art & Drama Camp in August. Students engaged in singing activities, took on character roles with props and costumes, and acted out scenes from famous operas like *Carmen*.

OPERA CLASS

In fall of 2022, Manitoba Opera presented 19 Opera Class workshops at 13 schools, serving nearly 600 students in schools in Winnipeg, Elie, and La Salle,



Olivia Kang with students after reading them the Korean version of *Opera Cat* during I Love to Read month.

Manitoba. Each 45-minute workshop was led by one of our teaching artists: Stephen Haiko-Pena (baritone), Katherine Mayba (soprano), and Ana Toumine (soprano).

With the use of costumes, props, and their voices, the artists engaged students in a hands-on collaborative exploration of storytelling and creativity in their classrooms.

Opera Class workshops this season were generously supported by Canada Life, the TELUS Friendly Future Foundation, and Stantec.

I LOVE TO READ MONTH

In February 2023, Manitoba Opera joined Winnipeg schools in celebrating “I Love to Read” Month by bringing professional opera singers into classrooms to read aloud from children’s books about opera.

Presenting artists taught students Italian opera vocabulary that appears in the stories, led classes in vocal warm-ups, and treated the children to a demonstration of opera singing. These workshops were presented in the language of instruction in participating classrooms, including workshops and stories presented in English, French, Ukrainian, and Korean. Sopranos Katherine



Soprano Ana Toumine poses with students after an Opera Class session.

Mayba, Ana Toumine, and Olivia Kang presented 22 workshops at 11 schools in Winnipeg, serving approximately 430 students.

OPERA STORYTIME

In 2021 Manitoba Opera created an online collection of Opera Storytime videos which feature local artists reading aloud from children’s books about opera-loving animals, and this online library has grown each season since.

This season, Manitoba Opera added two videos featuring American Sign Language translations. These videos were prepared and presented by Deaf American Sign Language translator Joanna Hawkins. The inclusion of ASL translations and closed captions for the English videos of *Opera Cat* and *Encore, Opera Cat!* makes those titles more accessible for students

who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and represents Manitoba Opera’s commitment to improving access to our educational content.

In fall 2023, with the guidance of Kelsey Lanaghan, Ojibway Language Teacher with Louis Riel School Division, Manitoba Opera embarked on a project to have *Opera Cat* and *Encore, Opera Cat!* translated into the Ojibway language so that read-aloud videos could be produced in Ojibway. John McLean, Language & Technology Developer, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc., translated the text and read the stories for this video project, which will be available to educators in fall 2023.

Opera Storytime was generously supported by Canada Life, Councillor Brian Mayes and the City of Winnipeg, and Payworks

Permissions to produce *Opera Cat* and *Encore, Opera Cat!* in new translations have been graciously given by author Tess Weaver.

Opera Storytime videos are freely available for educational use upon request.



Students participating in a summer BEEP session in the Seven Oaks School Division.

“WOW, YESTERDAY’S PRESENTATION WAS OUTSTANDING! THE STUDENTS LOVED IT AND GOT SO MUCH OUT OF IT!”

Purnakama Rajna, Teacher,
Victoria Albert School
I LOVE TO READ MONTH

DIGITAL EMERGING ARTISTS PROGRAM

(DEAP)

The third Digital Emerging Artists Program (DEAP) took place over four weeks in August 2022. This innovative training program provided opportunities for four emerging artists to explore their creative agency as they learned from core faculty and guest artists, and developed and produced an opera video project in collaboration with a professional recording team.

The program helped artists develop the necessary tools to apply the stagecraft and vocal techniques used in live opera performances to video productions. At the same time, participants learned about digital production, audience management, personal branding, and other skills that they will use

to manage their careers. Program activities were held virtually over Zoom, with artists and faculty joining from across Canada. This year's participants received nearly 400 hours of instruction and professional development, and the program provided earning opportunities for 48 artists and arts professionals.

INDEPENDENT LEARNER

This season's DEAP included for the first time a placement for an Independent Learner – a BIPOC artist who is in the early stages of their opera career and who would benefit from the instruction of the core faculty and other program instructors.

This position was created with the understanding that BIPOC artists

“THIS ART FORM
[OPENS] NEW PATHS
TO UNDERSTANDING
THE WORLD AND
OURSELVES.”

Ritchie Diggs
DEAP, 2022

have been systemically excluded from many of the opportunities that young opera artists rely upon to establish connections and learn their craft. The Independent Learner audited DEAP as a partial participant, studying with core faculty, developing essential digital skills, collaborating on creative projects with their peers, and building strong connections with Manitoba Opera's network of industry professionals.

This season's Independent Learner was baritone Ritchie Diggs, a Winnipeg-based actor, musician, and scholar originally from Liberia who found himself drawn to opera because of, as he indicates, “the ability of this art form to open new paths to understanding the world and ourselves.”

DEAP ALUMNI VIRTUAL SHOWCASE SPRING 2023

On Tuesday, March 14, Manitoba Opera presented a Digital Emerging Artists Alumni Virtual Showcase. Mezzo-soprano Lizzy Hoyt (DEAP 2020), who had recently made her company



DEAP participants and faculty at their first session.



Monica Huisman working with DEAP participants.

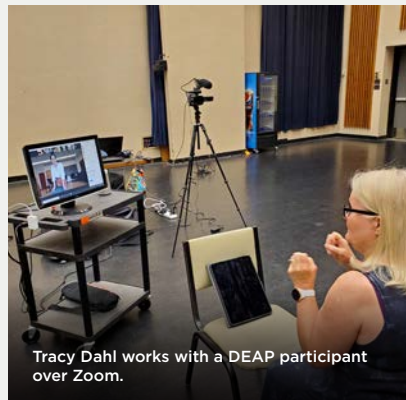
debut in the title role of *La Cenerentola*, hosted a public conversation on Zoom with six of her fellow DEAP alumni from the past three seasons.

These artists shared recent video projects and talked about developments in their careers, citing the ways that DEAP prepared them for success as they emerged onto stages and collaborated on multimedia projects nationally and internationally.

Featured artists included Sydney Baedke (soprano, DEAP 2020), Nicholas Borg (baritone, DEAP 2020), Yanik Gosselin (tenor, DEAP 2022), Luka Kawabata (baritone, DEAP 2021), Nolan Kehler (tenor, DEAP 2021), and Sara Schabas (soprano, DEAP 2021).

DEAP 2022 SPONSORS

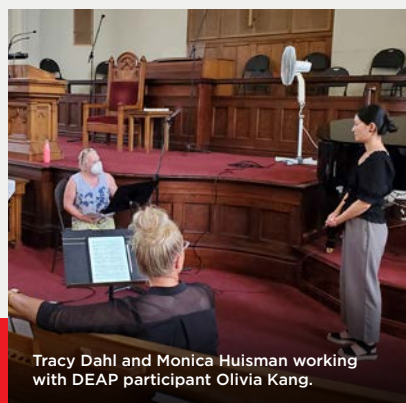
Manitoba Opera's Digital Emerging Artists Program has been generously supported by RBC Emerging Artists and the Gail Asper Family Foundation. The Independent Learner position was supported by Cambrian Credit Union.



Tracy Dahl works with a DEAP participant over Zoom.



DEAP participant Yanik Gosselin in a Zoom session.



Tracy Dahl and Monica Huisman working with DEAP participant Olivia Kang.

EMERGING ARTISTS

ANA TOUMINE WINNIPEG
Soprano

OLIVIA KANG WINNIPEG
Soprano

ELLITA GAGNER TORONTO
Mezzo-Soprano

YANIK GOSSELIN HALIFAX
Tenor

INDEPENDENT LEARNER

RITCHIE DIGGS WINNIPEG
Baritone

CORE FACULTY

VOICE

Tracy Dahl

Monica Huisman

Marion Newman

John Tessier

CONTENT CREATION

Ann Hodges

COACHES & GUEST INSTRUCTORS

Stephen Bell
Digital Media

Tadeusz Biernacki
Collaborative Piano

Nicholas Borg
Civic Engagement

Lara Ciekiewicz
Diction & Repertoire

Chris Enns
Personal Finance

Rebecca Hass
Life Coaching

Michael McMahon
Diction

Katherine Twaddle
Acting

Nataliya Tymchenko
Voice

OPERA ARTIST RESILIENCE PROGRAM

This season, five young artists received short-term employment placements with Manitoba Opera through the Association for Opera in Canada's Opera Artist Resilience program (OAR). This federally funded program provided opportunities for high-impact, short-term job placements that aid in skills development for artists.

The "earning and learning" occurred over a three-month period from January to March with the artists assisting in the areas of social media, community engagement, education, development, and event planning.

RITCHIE DIGGS

Baritone Ritchie Diggs (DEAP Independent Learner, 2022) was involved in a two-part project working with Dr. Scott Miller, Education & Community Engagement Coordinator. Ritchie

developed the *Così fan tutte* study guide for educators and prepared and presented the *Così fan tutte* Opera Primer, a free lecture about the production.

JOANNA LOEPP THIESSEN

Soprano Joanna Loepp Thiessen worked with the development team and developed skill sets in event management as the 50th Anniversary Assistant, working on the Honour Roll Reception and Government House chorus recognition event.

EMILY MYERS

Emily is studying voice at Canadian Mennonite University and is interested in helping others through music. She assisted with developing proposals to renew current corporate sponsors and conducted prospective research for future partnership opportunities.

ASHLEY SCHNEBERGER

Soprano Ashley Schneberger worked with the marketing team in the development of social media posts and promotional ideas to promote the 50th Season Anniversary Concert, *Così fan tutte*, and 50 Weeks of Opera.



Anna Schwartz (OAR placement) selling raffle tickets at the Mozart & Mimosas brunch at The Leaf. Photo: L. Norman

ANNA SCHWARTZ

A piano student at Canadian Mennonite University with an interest in performance, composition, and conducting, Anna assisted with both public and private funding opportunities. She researched local company sponsorship opportunities and contributed to both grant applications and reporting.

MINI-MENTORSHIP EVENT

In addition to the five OAR placements, Manitoba Opera hosted 12 opera artists from across the country, including our student ambassadors, who participated in a two-hour learning event. General Director & CEO Larry Desrochers; Director of Marketing Darlene Ronald; Grants & Corporate Giving Manager Ashley Boychuk; and Education & Community Engagement Coordinator Dr. Scott Miller gave presentations on artistic leadership, marketing for the arts, fund sourcing, and community engagement, respectively. The Zoom workshop was coordinated and managed by Executive Assistant Kyle Briscoe.



(l to r) Camilla Christophersen, Ashley Boychuk, and Joanna Loepp Thiessen (OAR placement) in the office.

STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

This season's anniversary initiatives included a unique opportunity for post-secondary music students to go behind the scenes of Manitoba Opera. The Student Ambassador Program provided an opportunity for students from the University of Manitoba and Canadian Mennonite University to learn about careers in arts administration and share their passion for opera with classmates - and get paid to do so.

Student ambassadors worked at performances and events introducing speakers, helping at the photo wall and souvenir table, and meeting the artists.

"Working behind the scenes with Manitoba Opera during *La Cenerentola* was not only

an informative and valuable experience, but also pure magic!" explained University of Manitoba's Kyla Kelsey.

Emily Myers from Canadian Mennonite University added, "I had a fantastic time working alongside Manitoba Opera on *La Cenerentola*. I was able to learn about what happens backstage to produce a show, as well as seeing what goes into creating an enjoyable and positive experience for patrons."

STUDENTS

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

EMILY MYERS
GEORG NEUHOFFER
SAM PERROTT
ANNA SCHWARTZ

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

SONIA CAMPBELL
KYLA KELSEY
ALICE MACGREGOR
AEMILIA MOSER
ASHLEY SCHNEBERGER



Student ambassadors Ashley Schneberger and Sam Perrott along with Executive Assistant Kyle Briscoe at Classic Radio for a segment with Simeon Rusnak.



Kyla Kelsey and Rob Herriot at a reception.



Student ambassadors and Executive Assistant Kyle Briscoe at a show.



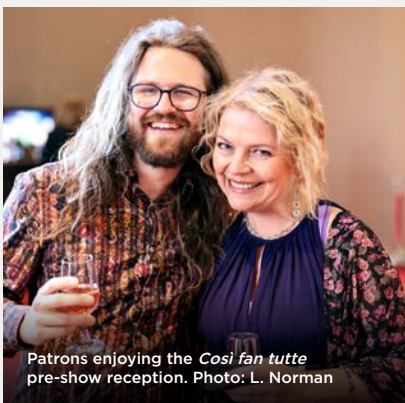
Student ambassadors and Executive Assistant Kyle Briscoe reviewing their tasks at a show with Dr. Scott Miller, Education & Community Engagement Coordinator.

CONNECTING WITH SUPPORTERS

Events around the productions provide excellent opportunities to connect with supporters, funders, and sponsors and enhance their opera experiences.



Guests enjoying the Mozart & Mimosas brunch at The Leaf. Photo: L. Norman



Patrons enjoying the *Così fan tutte* pre-show reception. Photo: L. Norman



Executive Assistant Kyle Briscoe and Student Ambassador Aemilia Moser at the *Così fan tutte* Sitzprobe Q&A with director Rob Herriot.

SIT IN ON THE SITZ

A special benefit for donors of \$100 or more, Sit in on the Sitz is an opportunity to experience the first rehearsal of the singers with the orchestra. Over light refreshments, guests enjoy a chat with the director followed by a Q&A and then attend the Sitzprobe rehearsal. At both events this year, stage director Rob Herriot captivated the audience with details on the staging of *La Cenerentola* and *Così fan tutte*. On November 2, the Q&A was hosted by Student Ambassador Anna Schwartz and fellow Student Ambassador Alice MacGregor hosted on April 18.

INTERMISSION RECEPTIONS

During the mainstage intermissions, Manitoba Opera hosts receptions that are attended by Camerata donors, government officials, and sponsors.

POST-SHOW RECEPTIONS

Special guests including Camerata donors, sponsors, and government officials are invited to join the board, staff, artistic team, and performers at a post-show reception on opening night of each mainstage production. This celebratory event is held on the Piano Nobile and catered by Bergmann's on Lombard.



Guests chat with Judith Chambers, Chair, Board of Trustees at the Camerata reception. Photo: L. Norman

CLIENT HOSTING

A private reception was hosted for Performance Sponsor IG Wealth Management at the opening night of *Così fan tutte*. Thirty guests joined us for wine and hors d'oeuvres catered by Bergmann's on Lombard. IG Wealth guests also had a chance to meet mezzo-soprano Lizzy Hoyt to learn about her experiences as an artist.

CAMERATA EVENT

On Sunday, April 16, Camerata donors and sponsors were welcomed at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights for a reception with wine and hors d'oeuvres, catered by WOW Hospitality. Opera arias were performed by tenor Nolan Kehler and soprano Keely McPeek, accompanied by pianist Cary Denby. A special Q&A about the upcoming world premiere of *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North*

was hosted by Larry Desrochers with scholar Nicole Stonyk, doctoral student, Indigenous Studies, University of Manitoba, speaking on behalf of Dr. Suzanne Steele, librettist/story teller, and co-composer Neil Weisensel.

MOZART & MIMOSAS OPERA BRUNCH

On Sunday, May 28, Manitoba Opera hosted Mozart and Mimosas, an opera brunch. Nearly 200 guests gathered at The Leaf at Assiniboine Park to tour the biomes, enjoy a buffet, and hear live opera. Pink-themed table florals provided by floral sponsor, Academy Florist added to the bright and festive atmosphere.

Soprano Nikita Silagy Labdon, bass-baritone Stephen Haiko-Pena, and collaborative pianist Lee Houghton Stewart performed a selection of arias and duets by Mozart. The finale

was the energetic and well-loved duo "Pa-Pa-Pa Papageno" from *The Magic Flute*. The artists were sponsored by our Emerging Artist Sponsor Mile Road Productions.

A special thank you to Flavia Fernandez Fabio for donating a private wine tasting for eight which was raffled off and to artist Melina Zevaoglu for providing a work, *Blooming in the Wild*, for the silent auction.

This beautiful event was a fitting final celebration to cap off Manitoba Opera's 50th season anniversary.



Choreographer Brenda Gorlick, and Nicole Cadotte-Worden at Mozart & Mimosas. Photo: L. Norman



Soprano Keely McPeek performs an excerpt from *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* at the Camerata reception. Photo: L. Norman



Kirk Eichelberger (Alidoro), Lizzy Hoyt (Angelina), and John Tessier (Don Ramiro) at the *La Cenerentola* post-show reception. Photo: L. Norman

“[JOHN TESSIER] FILLED THE STAGE WITH HIS NATURALLY REGAL APPEARANCE AND UNABASHEDLY LYRICAL VOICE IDEALLY SUITED FOR THE COMPOSER’S EAR-PLEASING MUSIC...”

The Free Press
LA CENERENTOLA, 2022

THE POWER OF VOICE

Currently in its quiet phase, The Power of Voice Endowment Campaign was launched with the goal to create a fully capitalized \$10M endowment fund for Manitoba Opera. This will consist of \$5.8M to be raised in private donations, with matching funds of approximately 65 cents per dollar from the Canadian Heritage Endowment Incentives Program and The Winnipeg Foundation.

Held at The Winnipeg Foundation, the A. Kerr Twaddle Robert H. Thorlakson Manitoba Opera Endowment Fund is named for Manitoba Opera's founders and will be an investment in the future of opera in our province.

Gifts made through The Power of Voice campaign are combined with others and

permanently invested. The annual income earned from the interest generated will be used to reach new heights of artistry, enhance education initiatives, and effect positive change in our community for decades to come.

On October 11, 2022, Manitoba Opera held an event to announce lead gifts to the campaign totalling \$1.75M from Gail Asper, Phil & Ilse Ens, Tannis M. Richardson, and BMO Financial Group. These donors are leading the way and hope that their gifts will inspire a chorus of others to join them in helping to shape the future of opera in Manitoba.

As of May 31, 2023, including all pledges, The Power of Voice Endowment Campaign has raised \$3,565,559 towards our goal of \$10M.



CAMPAIGN CABINET

Thank you to The Power of Voice Cabinet members who are lending their names and support to the campaign.

HONOURARY CO-CHAIRS

Susan Bowden Twaddle
Deborah Thorlakson

CO-CHAIRS

Judith Chambers
Elba Haid

HONOURARY CABINET

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

CABINET MEMBERS

Paul Bruch-Wiens
Phil Ens
Laurel Malkin
Alex Robinson
Keith A. Sinclair
Larry Desrochers*
Tania Douglas*

EXECUTIVE CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT

Susan A. Thompson

* STAFF

THE POWER OF VOICE DONORS

Thank you to the following donors who have already made a gift to the campaign and are helping to shape the future of opera in Manitoba.

Gifts made to the A. Kerr Twaddle Robert H. Thorlakson Manitoba Opera Endowment Fund

\$1,000,000+

Gail Asper, O.C., O.M., LL.D.
& Michael Paterson

\$250,000-\$999,999

BMO
Mr. & Mrs. Phil & Ilse Ens
Mrs. Tannis M. Richardson

\$100,000-\$249,999

Elba ❖ & Marshall ◊ Haid
& Lara Secord Haid
Mrs. Deborah Thorlakson
in memory of
Dr. Robert H. Thorlakson

\$25,000-\$99,999

Ms. Susan Glass
& Mr. Arni Thorsteinson
E.J. (Ted) Ransby
One Anonymous Donor

\$5,000-\$24,999

Carol Bellringer & Greg Doyle
Judith ❖ & Markus Chambers
Dr. David Folk ❖ & Laurel Malkin
Carol Harvey
Richard Irish
Mile Road Productions
Mrs. Donna Plant
Drs. Bill Pope
& Elizabeth Tippet Pope
Gerry & Barb Price
Sanford & Deborah Riley
Keith ❖ & Alora Sinclair
Robert Vineberg & Lena Horne
One Anonymous Donor

\$1000-\$4,999

Dr. Linda Asper
in memory of Aubrey Asper
Mrs. Susan Bowden Twaddle
in memory of the
Hon. A. Kerr Twaddle
Ms. Diane Boyle
Dawn Bruch
& Paul Bruch-Wiens ❖
Economical Insurance
Marion Lewis

Ms. & Mr. Abbie & Garth Grieder
Alex Robinson ❖
& Natasa Simeonidis
Mr. & Mrs. Robert
& Eileen Stuebing
Dr. Susan A. Thompson
Faye Warren
Two Anonymous Donor

UP TO \$999

Doneta Brotchie, C.M.
& Harry Brotchie
Bethany Bunko ◆
Katherine Cobor
& Gordon Steindel
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Barbara & Brian Crow
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Lorraine Griffiths
Ray Karasevich ❖
& Allison Fulford
Alan & Shirley Kessler
Barbara Scheuneman
Howie & Sue Simpson
Terracon Development Ltd.
Three Anonymous Donors



Former Board member Bill Pope and Past Chair Elba Haid at the Mayor's Community Service Award Luncheon. Photo: C. Corneau



Tenor David Pomeroy, 50th Anniversary Concert. Photo: R. Tinker

CELEBRATING OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The 50th Anniversary Season provided the company with a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the last five decades as we looked both back and forward.

From being awarded the City of Winnipeg Community Service Award at the start of the season to having a specialty beer created for the company, and presenting the first-ever Canuck-style *Così fan tutte*, the year was filled with a number of memorable initiatives and special events that celebrated the company's achievements, artistic success, and the people, organizations, and supporters who made it all possible.



Chorus members and spouses at the Government House reception. Photo: M. Duboff



Larry Desrochers and Judith Chambers (far right) with past chairs and presidents Elba Haid, Jennifer Snyder, Rosalind Dick, Leigh Taylor, and Robert Vineberg who were honoured at the *La Cenerentola* Opening Night Dinner. Photo: L. Norman

MANITOBA OPERA RECEIVES CITY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

On Friday, July 22, Mayor Brian Bowman honoured Manitoba Opera with an Organization Community Service Award in recognition of the company's 50th anniversary season.

The City of Winnipeg Community Service Award was established by the Mayor's Office in the 1950s. This award is presented to give recognition to individuals or organizations of the City of Winnipeg, who through their dedication, have demonstrated excellence and achievement in any field of endeavor, benefitting in an outstanding manner the social, cultural, or economic well-being of their community.

The presentation was made at a luncheon hosted by the Mayor's Office at City Hall. Forty people were in attendance for the event and included members of the current and previous boards of trustees, staff, donors, sponsors, volunteers, artists, and supporters.

Tenor James McLennan, accompanied by pianist Laura Loewen, kicked off the proceedings with a performance of "You are My Heart's Delight" ("Dein ist mein ganzes Herz") from the operetta, *The Land of Smiles*.

Board of Trustees Chair, Judith Chambers, and General Director & CEO, Larry Desrochers, accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

PAST CHAIRS & PRESIDENTS HONOURED AT OPENING NIGHT DINNER

On Saturday, November 12, prior to the first performance of *La Cenerentola*, Manitoba Opera's 50th season opened with an elegant dinner on the Piano Nobile to honour former Presidents and Chairs of the Board of Trustees.

Seven individuals were recognized for their dedication and leadership:

- Rosalind Dick**
President 1993 to 1995
- Richard Irish**
President 1997 to 2000
- Leigh Taylor**
President 2001 to 2004
- Peter George**
President/Chair 2004 to 2011
- Jennifer Snyder**
Chair 2011 to 2014
- Robert Vineberg**
Chair 2014 to 2016
- Elba Haid**
Chair 2016 to 2021

Eighty-seven guests enjoyed a wonderful meal by our Catering Sponsor, Bergmann's on Lombard, along with wine pairings from our 50th

Anniversary Season Wine Sponsor, Manitoba Liquor Mart. During the pre-reception, Liquor Mart also treated guests to a wine and whisky tasting from their Distinctions catalogue.

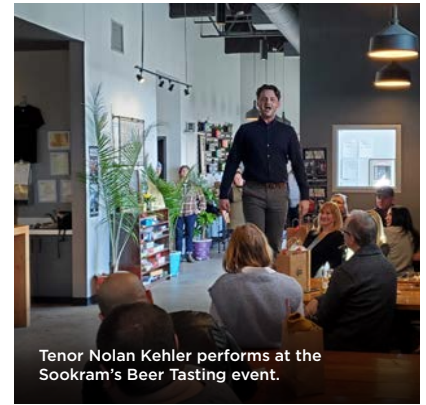
The Opening Night Dinner was a great kick off to the new season, bringing opera lovers together, and celebrating our leadership volunteers.

BOTTOMS UP! CUSTOM BEER LAUNCHED

In February, local craft brewery Sookram's Brewing Company released Aria, a one-of-a-kind, limited-release Italian Pilsner created by brew master Andrew Sookram to celebrate Manitoba Opera's 50th season anniversary.

The beer was available for sale at Sookram's (479 Warsaw Avenue), as well as at select Manitoba Liquor Marts and vendors, and at the Centennial Concert Hall for Manitoba Opera performances.

"We were delighted to be partner with the team at Sookram's in the creation of a beer in honour of our 50th anniversary," commented Larry Desrochers, General



Tenor Nolan Kehler performs at the Sookram's Beer Tasting event.

Director & CEO. "Beer and opera have both been enjoyed for hundreds of years and having an 'opera beer' is a wonderful way to salute our anniversary."

In March, a beer tasting was held at the Sookram's location. Patrons sampled a flight of beers, including Aria, had a tour of the brewery, received snack packs, had a chance to win prizes, and were treated to a performance by tenor Nolan Kehler who sang a selection of works in English and German.

CHORUS CELEBRATED AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE

On Tuesday, March 21, the Manitoba Opera Chorus was celebrated at Government House, the historic residence of the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, for their vital contribution to the success of the company's past five decades.

In her remarks, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, The Honourable Anita Neville, P.C., O.M., referenced the important role Manitoba Opera plays in our community:

"...Fifty years ago a dedicated group of opera lovers were



Mayor Brian Bowman with Judith Chambers and Larry Desrochers receiving the City of Winnipeg Community Service Award. Photo: C. Corneau

determined to create a company here to perform out of the beautiful new Centennial Concert Hall. That determination has produced a half century of opera. It has encouraged the flowering of home-grown talent. It has enabled Manitobans to see international opera stars. It has allowed generations of Manitobans to be transported musically through works of timeless beauty and new imagination. To all of you who make that magic happen, congratulations on a musical milestone.”

A light meal was provided at the reception attended by chorus members, as well as members of the Board of Trustees and staff team.

50TH SEASON STORIES SERIES

For five decades Manitoba Opera has touched the lives of thousands through music and song, creating memories that last a lifetime.

Throughout the 50th anniversary season, the company shared a collection of wonderful stories and personal recollections gathered from family members of founders, donors, artists, chorus, and the creative team, board members, administration, and volunteers through both written installments and short videos.

FEATURED IN THE WRITTEN SERIES:

(alphabetical order)

Pat Bovey, Michael Cavanagh, Rosalind Dick, Jeanie Dubberley, Nikki Einfeld, Hedio Epp, Monica and Anna Huisman, Sheldon Johnson, Kozub sisters: Koren

Kominski, Tusia Kozub, and Karin Woods, Craig McIntosh and Lorraine Beck, Robert Pel, Bill Pope & Elizabeth Tippet Pope, Kurt Schwarz, and Al Simmons.

FEATURED IN THE VIDEO SERIES:

(alphabetical order)

Gail Asper, Tadeusz Biernacki, Judith Chambers, Tracy Dahl, Larry Desrochers, Peter George, Elba Haid, Peter Klymkiw, Tyrone Paterson, Deborah Thorlakson, Katherine Twaddle, and David Watson.

50 WEEKS OF OPERA

The 50 Weeks of Opera social media initiative was created to ensure that each of the 50 weeks during the 50th Season Anniversary had a dedicated post.

Over the season, the posts brought attention to everything

from remembrances of past productions and events to the current season productions and all the initiatives that occurred during the year to celebrate the company’s golden anniversary.

THE ARCHIVAL PROJECT

The 50th Season provided a great impetus to begin archiving production photos, programs, and other company memorabilia.

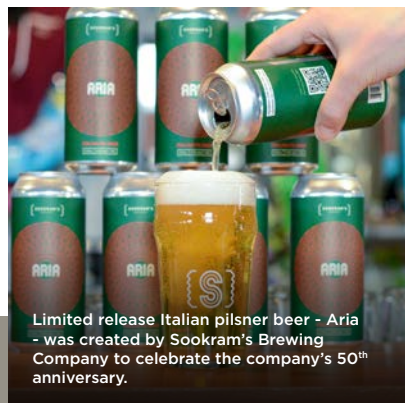
Over the summer, Darlene Ronald, Director of Marketing, reviewed, sorted, and organized all the printed photographs, slides and negatives starting with the very first performances in the 1970s.

Production images that have been digitized since the early 2000s were also copied onto a hard drive, and thanks to former board of trustee, Leona Herzog, over 20 years of printed programs were scanned to ensure safekeeping.

This important archiving work will continue in the upcoming seasons.



(l to r) Don Larsen, Russ Foster, Celoris Miller, and Christina Pyrz-Kowall with Jeanie Dubberley (black top) former staff member and volunteer at the Mayor’s lunch. Photo: C. Corneau



Limited release Italian pilsner beer - Aria - was created by Sookram’s Brewing Company to celebrate the company’s 50th anniversary.



Current and former chorus members along with Larry Desrochers, Ty Paterson, and Tad Biernacki at the 50th Anniversary Concert post-show reception. Photo: L. Norman

50TH SEASON ANNIVERSARY HONOUR ROLL

As part of the 50th Season Anniversary celebrations, Manitoba Opera recognized people and organizations whose involvement with the company over the past five decades has been instrumental to our success. This includes contributions in the areas of service, artistic endeavors, advocacy, administration, ambassadorship, volunteering, and financial support.

HONOUR ROLL MEMBERS WERE RECOGNIZED AT
THE 50TH SEASON ANNIVERSARY CONCERT, FEBRUARY 25, 2023.

Joann Alexander Smith ◊
Gail Asper,
O.C., O.M., LL.D.
Tadeusz A. Biernacki
Michael Blais
BMO
Carolyn Boyes
Canada Life
Michael D. Cavanagh
Tracy Dahl, C.M.
Cary Denby
Rosalind Dick
Jeanie M. Dubberley
Phil, O.M. & Ilse Ens
Phillip Ens
Hedie L. Epp
Judith D. Forst,
O.C., O.B.C.
Peter George
Dr. Irving Guttman,
C.M., O.B.C. ◊
Elba Haid

Leona Herzog
Lori Houston
Audrey Hubbard
I.A.T.S.E. Local 63
IG Wealth Management
Sheldon Johnson
Koren Kaminski
Tusia Kozub
Bruce Lang ◊
Bill and Shirley ◊ Loewen
Manitoba Arts Council
Manitoba Opera Chorus
Craig McIntosh
& Lorraine Beck
Leo ◊ & Margareth Mol ◊
Michael Nesbitt
Tyrone Paterson
Donna Plant
Drs. William Pope
& Elizabeth Tippett
Pope
Andre Prevost

Richardson Foundation
Hartley, L.V.O., O.C.,
O.M., LL.D., & Heather
Richardson
Tannis M. Richardson,
C.M., LL.D.
Alex Robinson
Darlene Ronald
Family Members of
Darlene Ronald -
Stewart, Derrick, and
Ryan Heaton, Beverly
Laurin
Karl Schaible
Eleanor Siddall ◊
Al Simmons
Dr. Lawrence Soloway ◊
Stano Spina ◊
John Standing ◊
Bill Stewart
Jane Stewart
Stewart Thompson ◊

Dr. Robert H. ◊
Thorlakson, O.C. &
Deborah Thorlakson
The Honourable
A. Kerr Twaddle ◊
Susan B. Twaddle
Robert Vineberg
Ruth Waters ◊
David Watson
Lois Watson-Lyons
Alice Wiebe
Bill Williams
Winnipeg Arts Council
The Winnipeg
Foundation
Winnipeg Free Press
Winnipeg
Symphony Orchestra
Karin Woods
Lori Yorke



Judith Chambers and Larry Desrochers with Honour Roll members the Kozub sisters: (l to r) Tusia Kozub, Koren Kaminski, and Karin Woods. Photo: L. Norman



Judith Chambers and Larry Desrochers with Honour Roll member Tannis M. Richardson. Photo: L. Norman

CAREER MILESTONES

TRACY DAHL AND DAVID WATSON

The production of *Così fan tutte* marked a significant milestone for two cast members: coloratura soprano Tracy Dahl singing the role of Despina, the housekeeper, and baritone David Watson, the cynical philosopher Don Alphonso.

Manitoba Opera and our audiences have been so fortunate to have had these two talented artists share their gifts with us for so many years.

Tracy started with Manitoba Opera as a cast member in the Opera in the Schools program in the early 1980s. She made her mainstage debut with the company 41 years ago, almost to the day, as Barbarina in *The Marriage of Figaro* (April 22, 24, 27, 1982) and has been in 13 productions since then (*Così* is the 14th.)

Così fan tutte marks David's 51st production with the company. Also a veteran of the school program, David's mainstage debut was as Baron Duphol in the Sunday matinee of *La Traviata* in November 1979.

Bravo to Tracy and David for their stellar careers and for providing countless unforgettable moments on our stage.

CHORUS MASTER CELEBRATES 40 YEARS WITH COMPANY

Tadeusz Biernacki celebrated his 40th anniversary as a chorus director, conductor, and rehearsal pianist with Manitoba Opera this season.

Tad is an award-winning internationally acclaimed pianist and a composer, and the company has been very fortunate to have had him on the artistic team for the past four decades.



Tadeusz Biernacki as Sam, the hotel piano player, *Così fan tutte*, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

LONGTIME DRESSER BIDS ADIEU

After 45 years as a dresser for the company, Nancy Martin fastened her last button and tied her last bow on closing night of *Così fan tutte*. Nancy's winsome smile and cheerful outlook will be greatly missed backstage!



Retiring dresser Nancy Martin with Sheldon Johnson, stage manager Robert Pel, and Tracy Dahl backstage.



Tracy Dahl (Despina) and David Watson (Don Alphonso), *Così fan tutte*, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker



Tracy Dahl (Despina) and David Watson (Don Alphonso), *Così fan tutte*, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

MANITOBA OPERA CHORUS HALL OF FAME

The Chorus Hall of Fame was created in 2023 to recognize long-time choristers for their service to the company.

In recognition of the company's 50th Season Anniversary, the first inductees to the Hall of Fame are 10 choristers who have each performed in over 50 operas. They were recognized at the 50th Season Anniversary Concert February 25, 2023, and each received a framed production photo.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FIRST INDUCTEES!

INDUCTEES	NUMBER OF PRODUCTIONS	1 ST PRODUCTION	50 TH PRODUCTION	FINAL/ MOST RECENT PRODUCTION
SOPRANO				
Linda Feasby	54	<i>Aïda</i> (1984)	<i>Falstaff</i> (2016)	<i>Susannah</i> (2019)
Deborah Ginther	58	<i>Aïda</i> (1984)	<i>Don Pasquale</i> (2013)	<i>Susannah</i> (2019)
Kadri Irwin	61	<i>Aïda</i> (1984)	<i>The Daughter of the Regiment</i> (2012)	<i>Susannah</i> (2019)
MEZZO				
Christina Pyrz-Kowall	68	<i>Carmen</i> (1982)	<i>Transit of Venus</i> (2007)	<i>Susannah</i> (2019)
Mavis Ritchie	58	<i>Turandot</i> (1980)	<i>The Daughter of the Regiment</i> (2012)	<i>Susannah</i> (2019)
TENOR				
Russ Foster	74	<i>Norma</i> (1983)	<i>Die Fledermaus</i> (2006)	<i>La Cenerentola</i> (2022)
Donald Hodgson	58	<i>Aïda</i> (1975)	<i>La Bohème</i> (1998)	<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> (2003)
Peter Klymkiw	74	<i>Rigoletto</i> (1975)	<i>The Barber of Seville</i> (2001)	<i>Susannah</i> (2019)
BASS				
Ed Duncan	71	<i>La Traviata</i> (1973)	<i>Turandot</i> (1996)	<i>The Magic Flute</i> (2011)
Juris Svenne	63	<i>Rigoletto</i> (1975)	<i>Aïda</i> (2000)	<i>Turandot</i> (2015)



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.

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



Così fan tutte, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker



Joan Racano, Judith Chambers, Al Simmons, Tara Letwiniuk and Terence Sakohianisaks Douglas at the 50th Anniversary Concert reception. Photo: L. Norman

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

After completing four full terms, Alex Robinson retired from the Board of Trustees. This was Alex's second round as a trustee, having previously served on the board from 1998-2006. During Alex's time, he served on the committee for the Gala Reception for Tannis M. Richardson, recipient of the Gail Asper Award and The Power of Voice Endowment Campaign.

The end of the 2022/23 season also marked the retirement of Paul Bruch-Wiens, having served on the board since 2019. In 2020, Paul was elected to the Executive Committee, in the role of Vice-Chair. During his time on the board, Paul also provided his expertise to the Finance Committee.

Manitoba Opera is grateful to have counted Alex and Paul among its advocates and their leadership and guidance will be missed around the board table.

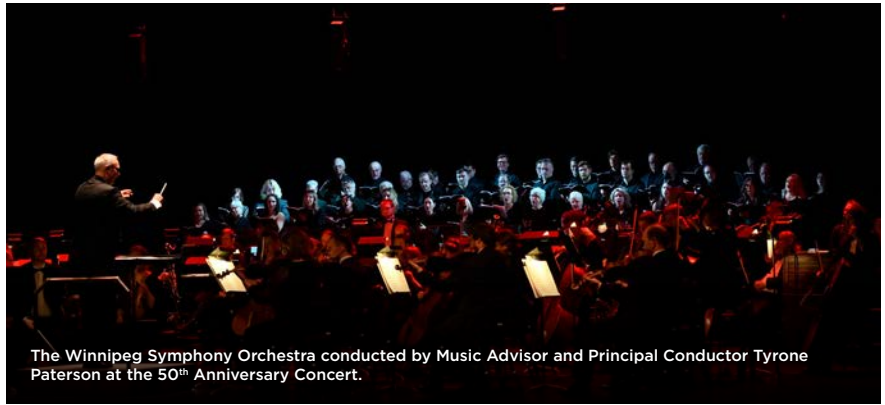
At the 2022/23 Annual General Meeting, members of the organization re-elected Daniela Ignat, Maria Mitousis, Charlene Ord, Grant Suderman, and Lori Yorke.



Patrons posing for a photo at the 50th Anniversary Concert. Photo: R. Tinker

“THEY ENJOYED THE PRESENTATION SO MUCH. THANKS FOR OFFERING SUCH A SUPER OPPORTUNITY...”

Jean Gilbert
Principal, St. Gerard School
OPERA CLASS WORKSHOP



The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Music Advisor and Principal Conductor Tyrone Paterson at the 50th Anniversary Concert.

Returning trustees in mid-terms are Judith Chambers, Flavia Fernandez Fabio, Dr. David Folk, Ray Karasevich, Lana Maidment, Terence Sakohianisaks Douglas, and Keith Sinclair.

Joining the board as new trustees are Sandy Chahal, COO of Lawton Partners Financial Planning Services; Nupur Kumari, Portfolio Manager, Caggemini Canada; and John Pacak, Owner, President, and CEO of the InnovoXL Group of Companies.

The staff looks forward to another successful season under the trustees' exemplary leadership and to welcoming the new trustees to the Board.

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 provides its service to the community.

Throughout the season, the Development staff attended various lunchtime learning

sessions and webinars provided by organizations such as the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Canadian Association of Gift Planners, and ArtsReach, on topics covering customer resource management, the role of nonprofit organizations in the post-pandemic world, and an overview of opera administration provided by field experts hosted by Opera America.

In early May 2023, the Development staff attended “The Build Good Summit”, a two-day conference in Winnipeg for nonprofit leaders, marketers, and fundraisers. Staff were inspired to look at donor engagement in new ways.

Ashley Boychuk, Grants & Corporate Giving Manager, received a scholarship from the Manitoba Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals to take the “Fundamentals of Fundraising Digital Course”, which includes six modules on the basics of fundraising.

During the season, Dr. Scott Miller, Education & Community Engagement Coordinator attended a variety of webinars

including “Civic Engagement in Opera” provided by Mass Culture, and “Building Gender Inclusivity in Opera” provided by Opera America. Scott also attended the virtual “Opera America Education and Community Engagement Forum”, which brings together staff across North America to discuss issues and trends in the education and community engagement realm at opera companies.

Another virtual professional development opportunity allowed Scott to attend Opera America's



Lizzy Hoyt (Angelina), *La Cenerentola*, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker



Danielle MacMillan (Dorabella) and Jamie Groot (Fiordiligi), *Cosi fan tutte* 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

second annual “Racial Justice Forum”, for three days of learning with the goal of establishing field-wide racial justice policies and practices.

In addition to this, Scott’s work included the contribution of Manitoba Opera statistics to the data collection project for “BIPOC Voices”, focusing on how the practices of performing arts companies can contribute to the production of BIPOC creators and artists.

Conference participation, professional development, and participation in special initiatives and programs demonstrate Manitoba Opera’s ongoing commitment to supporting and encouraging the talent, leadership, and skills of our board and staff.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Director of Development, Tania Douglas, completed her final year as a member of the Manitoba Philanthropy Awards Selection Committee. She continues to sit on the board of the Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba.

Tania continues her work as a mentor through the Association of Fundraising Professionals of Manitoba mentorship program and has begun working with an individual from the Lubov Foundation, a Ukrainian faith-based organization.

STAFF ROSTER

The 2022/23 season marked another year of evolution for the staff complement that supports the mission of Manitoba Opera.

In February 2023, Camilla Christophersen, Prospect Researcher & Campaign Assistant, left the organization to pursue other opportunities within the fundraising sector. During Camilla’s time, she provided research and support to the Power of Voice Endowment Campaign in addition to assistance to the Development department.

In June 2023, Kyle Briscoe left the organization to further pursue opera studies. Having previously

achieved a Bachelor’s Degree in Vocal Performance from the Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba, Kyle has been accepted into the Opera and Voice Program at McGill University’s Schulich School of Music to pursue a Master’s of Music.

The organization looks forward to welcoming two new team members, Ashley Schneberger and Anna Schwartz, to fill the vacancies created by the departures of Camilla and Kyle. Ashley will join the organization in July 2023 in the role of Development & Grants Assistant, while Anna will replace Kyle in the role of Executive Assistant in June 2023.

Anna and Ashley were participants in the inaugural year of Manitoba’s Opera’s Student Ambassador Program, which aimed to provide an opportunity for young artists to share their passion for opera with their fellow classmates and get a look behind the scenes at Manitoba Opera.

STAFF BENEFITS GROUP RRSP

At the beginning of the 2022 fiscal year, Manitoba Opera worked with Canada Life, our longest-running sponsor partner, and the team at McFadden Benefits to establish the first group RRSP for Manitoba Opera staff.

This board-approved group savings plan matches dollar for dollar, 3% of all full-time staff salaries. Over time, the fund will grow and help employees achieve their retirement goals.



Patrons renew their subscriptions for the 2023/24 season at a performance of *Cosi fan tutte*.

Enhancements to staff benefit packages like this demonstrate Manitoba Opera's commitment to attracting and retaining its highly skilled workforce.

GOVERNANCE

During the 2022/23 season, the Governance Committee worked closely with Rhonda Forgues, one of the Building Bridges Project team leads, to ensure that the objectives of the Building Bridges project were aligned with the organizational priorities and the mission of Manitoba Opera.

During the year, the committee reviewed work plans, recommendation reports, and a presentation to the Board of Trustees on the Winnipeg Indigenous Accord. The committee also laid the groundwork for the establishment of the *Li Keur* Advisory Council and conducted the initial planning for the formation of this working group.

As in previous seasons, the Governance Committee continued its work on developing and revising the policies and procedures of the organization. A major project this season was the development of a new trustee evaluation tool. The new evaluation model allows for both an individual assessment of a single trustee and a group assessment to gauge the overall effectiveness of the Board of Trustees. The new tool was used for the first time in March 2023 as part of the Chair's annual board evaluations.

The committee continued its work to further develop the Board of Trustees and was pleased to recruit and recommend Sandy



Larry Desrochers with *Li-Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* co-composer Neil Weisensel and Nicole Stonyk, representing librettist Dr. Susanne Steele at the Camerata reception. Photo: L. Norman

Chahal, Nupur Kumari, and John Pacak for appointment to the slate of nominees for the 2022/23 Annual General Meeting.

BUILDING BRIDGES

The 2022/23 season marked the third year of Manitoba Opera's Building Bridges project.

Developed to explore meaningful ways to build relationships with Indigenous communities in Manitoba, the organization was pleased to engage Rhonda Forgues of Spirited Ways Consulting.

Rhonda worked closely with a staff team consisting of Tania Douglas, Kyle Briscoe, and Michael Blais.

Rhonda's first task was to perform an audit of the organization, including reviewing policies, practices, and programming.

As a result of the audit, the first initiatives undertaken included doing a land acknowledgment at staff meetings and providing complimentary tickets to Indigenous organizations to attend Manitoba Opera performances.

In May 2023, Manitoba Opera became a signatory to the Winnipeg Indigenous Accord. The organization will build on this momentum into the 2023/24 season, by committing to the following goals:

In support of Call to Action 83, Manitoba Opera will:

Continue their support of the *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* project. *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* explores a little-known chapter in Louis Riel's life and focuses on the beauty and love of the homeland and of its people, with a focus on the role women



Tenor David Pomeroy and mezzo-soprano Nadia Krasteva at the 50th Anniversary Concert, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

have played in this history. This will be the first Indigenous-led opera presented on a Canadian opera mainstage.

In support of Call to Action 92i, Manitoba Opera will:

Begin the process of establishing an Indigenous Advisory Council to ensure Indigenous peoples are involved in the organizations' decision-making processes.

In support of Call to Action 92ii, Manitoba Opera will:

Develop and implement an Indigenous Procurement Policy.

Complete a review of existing human resource and governance policies and procedures to identify and implement changes to increase the recruitment and retention of Indigenous employees, board members, volunteers, performers, and audience members.

In support of Call to Action 92iii, Manitoba Opera will:

Create an organizational Indigenous education and awareness strategy, which will include undertaking a needs analysis by comparing existing training opportunities or resources to the employees' and board members' existing knowledge, and then bridging that gap with specific learning opportunities.

LI KEUR ADVISORY COUNCIL

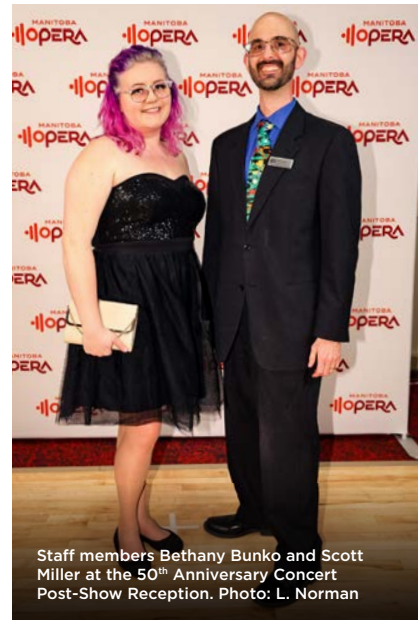
To support the community engagement work as part of the *Li Keur* project slated for November 2023, Manitoba Opera established an advisory committee and conducted the first meeting in March 2023.

To date, the Advisory Council is comprised of **Liz Barron**, Métis artist, member of the Sushkitew Art Collective, and former Manitoba Opera board member; **Dr. June Bruce**, **Dr. Agathe Chartrand**, and **Dr. Lorraine Coutu Lavallée**, Elders and Knowledge Keepers of the French-Michif language;

Rhonda Forgues, Spirited Ways Consulting; **Dr. Laura Forsythe**, Métis educator, Assistant Professor of Education, University of Winnipeg; **Louise Gordey**, Director of Community Programming, Louis Riel Institute; **Jean-Marc Lafond**, Riel family descendant, makeup artist with Manitoba Opera, and member of the Manitoba Living History Society; **Sharon Parenteau**, Executive Director, Louis Riel Institute; **Nicole Stonyk**, PhD student, Indigenous Studies, University of Manitoba; **Dée-Anne Vermette**, Elder and a member of l'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba.



Kirk Eichelberger (Alidoro), Nicholas Borg (Dandini), and John Tessier (Prince Ramiro), *La Cenerentola*, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker



Staff members Bethany Bunko and Scott Miller at the 50th Anniversary Concert Post-Show Reception. Photo: L. Norman



Larry Desrochers, General Director & CEO addresses the audience at the 50th Anniversary Concert, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker



Tannis M. Richardson, Karen Menkis, Jennifer Synder, with Board Chair Judith Chambers at the Mayor's Community Service Award Luncheon. Photo: C. Corneau

FINANCE REPORT

Manitoba Opera posted an aggregate operating surplus of \$5,000 following a drawdown of \$550,967 from its board-designated Operating Reserve Fund. This leaves \$168,630 in the fund to support activities for FY 2024 as the organization continues to rebuild its audience base following the COVID-19 pandemic.

GRANTS

Operational funding from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Manitoba Arts Council remained constant at \$255,000 and \$370,000, respectively. An increase of \$6,100 was received from the Winnipeg Arts Council bringing their grant to a total of \$127,600 annually.

Manitoba Opera was the recipient of additional support to help with the continuing recovery as the company moved on from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was \$113,200 received from the Manitoba Arts Council Sustainability Fund, \$51,000 from Canada Council for the Arts Sustainability Fund, and \$20,000 was retained from the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA). The original amount of the loan was \$60,000

of which Manitoba Opera repaid \$40,000 per the agreement with the Government of Canada.

BOX OFFICE

FY23 marked the return to two fully-staged operas and a 50th season anniversary concert on the mainstage with no social distancing measures in place. While subscription numbers were down from pre-pandemic levels, box office figures rebounded following FY22. Total box office revenues resulted in \$405,733 which is an increase of \$323,021 from \$82,712 in FY22.

FUNDRAISING

Special events were delivered in person for the first time since 2020. This included the Past President's Dinner and the Mozart & Mimosas brunch. Total revenue from special events was \$31,603.

Fundraising from all operational campaigns was \$751,738. Included in this amount is \$6,967 which was donated back by patrons for performance tickets, special events, and parking fees.

EXPENSES

Overall, savings were achieved in all departmental budgets. Development had an increase in



Jamie Groote (Fiordiligi) and Jean-Philippe Lazure (Ferrando), *Così fan tutte*, 2023.
Photo: R. Tinker

expenses due to the work on the endowment campaign. These were offset by revenues received from the endowment campaign.

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 FY 2010, 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, 2023, the fund grew to \$2,213,323 from \$1,383,300 at the end of the FY 2022.

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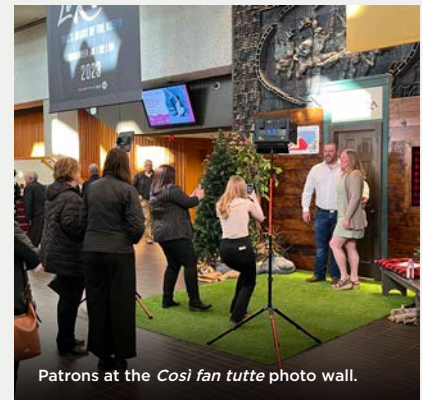
VOLUNTEERS

This season, over 30 volunteers contributed to the success of Manitoba Opera events and initiatives by assisting with a variety of essential duties, providing over 150 hours of volunteer service. Volunteer duties included:

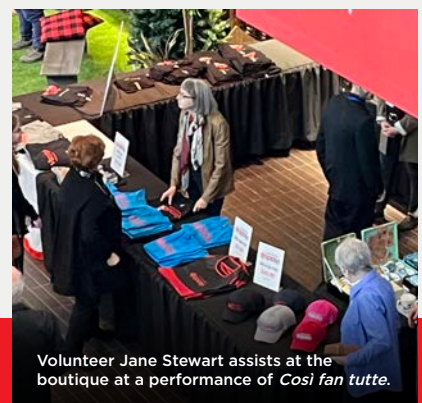
- Representing Manitoba Opera at the Manitoba Choral Association Festival
- Preparing mailings
- Updating our patron database
- Greeting guests and patrons at productions and events
- Accepting donated goods for our fall donation drive
- Staffing the boutique at our productions
- Stuffing season brochures in the program
- Collecting donations for opera education programs through our Pass the Hat initiative
- Surveying patrons about changes to our performance schedule



Volunteers Jeanie Dubberley and Hedio Epp at the Mozart & Mimosas brunch.
Photo: L. Norman



Patrons at the *Così fan tutte* photo wall.



Volunteer Jane Stewart assists at the boutique at a performance of *Così fan tutte*.



Mezzo-soprano Nadia Krasteva at the 50th Anniversary Concert. Photo: R. Tinker



Patrons at the *Così fan tutte* photo wall.



Lobby at a performance of *Così fan tutte*. Photo: L. Norman



Così fan tutte, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker



Peter McGillivray (Don Magnifico) and Nicholas Borg (Dandini), *La Cenerentola*, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker



Soprano Katherine Mayba with students at a summer BEEP workshop.

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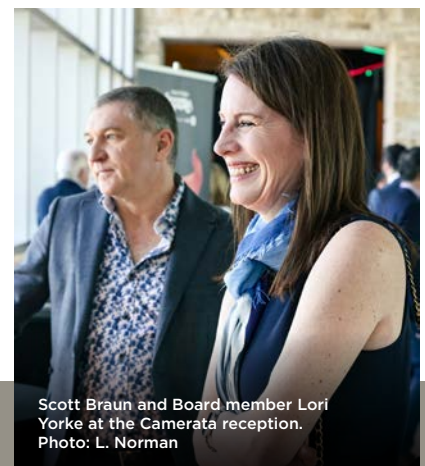
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Larry Desrochers with Past Chair Elba Haid and Chair Judith Chambers at the Mayor's Community Service Award Luncheon. Photo: C. Corneau



Scott Braun and Board member Lori Yorke at the Camerata reception. Photo: L. Norman

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Staff members Bethany Bunko and Michael Blais at the Government House reception. Photo: M. Duboff



Honour Roll members Darlene Ronald (staff) and family with Judith Chambers and Larry Desrochers at the Honour Roll reception, 50th Anniversary Concert. Photo: L. Norman



Members of the staff team at the Government House reception (l to r): Tania Douglas, Karen Stuart, Kyle Briscoe, Liz Miller, Scott Miller, and Joanna Loepp Thiessen (OAR). Photo: M. Duboff

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Manitoba Opera gratefully acknowledges the encouragement and financial support of our community of donors that allows us to create opera of the highest calibre. It is because of this generosity that the power and beauty of professional opera can be experienced right here in Manitoba.

For more information on making a donation to Manitoba Opera, contact Liz Miller at 204-942-0489. (Listings include donations made from June 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023.)

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Alison Darling and Bill Stewart
at the Camerata reception.
Photo: L. Norman

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Lizzy Hoyt (Angelina), John Tessier (Prince Ramiro), and Kirk Eichelberger (Alidoro), *La Cenerentola*, 2022. Photo: R. Tinker

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Patrons at the 50th Anniversary Concert photo wall. Photo: R. Tinker

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Patrons at the Camerata Reception. Photo: L. Norman



Danielle MacMillan (Dorabella) and Johnathon Kirby (Guglielmo), *Così fan tutte*, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker



Soprano Katherine Mayba with students during an Opera Class.



Soprano Hiromi Omura, 50th Anniversary Concert, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker



David Watson (Don Alphonso), and Tracy Dahl (Despina), *Così fan tutti*, 2023. Photo: R. Tinker

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