



LI KEUR: RIEL'S HEART OF THE NORTH **STUDY GUIDE**

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LI KEUR: RIEL'S HEART OF THE NORTH



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LI KEUR: RIEL'S HEART OF THE NORTH

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Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North, is a new opera with text by Dr. Suzanne M. Steele and music by co-composers Alex Kusturok and Neil Weisensel.

FAST FACTS

- “Li Keur” (pronounced Lee Cur) is translated to “the heart” in Michif, the language of the Métis peoples. The inspiration for this work came from the diaries of Louis Riel.
- *Li Keur: Riel’s Heart of the North* is the first Indigenous-led opera to ever be produced on a Canadian opera company’s main stage!
- The opera is sung in five languages: Southern-Michif, French-Michif, Anishinaabemowin, French, and English.
- *Li Keur: Riel’s Heart of the North* celebrates the women, languages, and culture of the Métis people.
- *Li Keur: Riel’s Heart of the North* features a number of elements that might surprise some opera lovers including fiddling, jigging, and even a boxing match and sewing competition!



Set pieces for *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* inspired by Métis beadwork are designed to fit together like a multicolored mosaic.

THE PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

November 18, 22, 24, 2023

Dress Rehearsal / Student Night: November 16, 2023

Centennial Concert Hall

Music composed by Alex Kusturok and Neil Weisensel

Libretto by Dr. Suzanne M. Steele

Approximately 2 hours 25 minutes in two acts, including one 20-minute intermission

Premiere Performance

Sung in Southern-Michif, French-Michif, Anishinaabemowin, French, and English
with projected English translations

PRINCIPAL CAST

Mémère	Spoken	PAULETTE DUGUAY*
Joséphine-Marie/Narrator	Spoken	CHARLENE VAN BUEKENHOUT*
Louis Riel/Robideau	Baritone	EVAN KORBUT*
Josette La Grande	Mezzo-soprano	REBECCA CUDDY*
Marie Serpente	Mezzo-soprano	KEELY MCPEEK*
Rose/Marguerite	Soprano	JULIE LUMSDEN*
La Crosse/The Englishman	Tenor	JAMES MCLENNAN
La Roche	Tenor	NOLAN KEHLER*
Pierre La Grande	Baritone	DAVID WATSON
Black Goose #1	Mezzo-soprano	MICHELLE LAFFERTY*
Black Goose #2	Tenor	SCOTT RUMBLE*
Black Geese (Dancers)		YVONNE CHARTRAND*
		DANIELLE ENBLON*
		MODESTE MCKENZIE*
		ELISE PAGE*
		JERA WOLFE
Black Geese (Musicians)		ALEX KUSTUROK (FIDDLE)*
		MELISSA ST. GODDARD (FIDDLE)*
		JORDAN MCCONNELL*

*Manitoba Opera debut

FEATURING

Adult and Children's Choruses

Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

PRODUCTION

Conductor	NEIL WEISENSEL*
Director	SIMON MIRON*
Choreographer	YVONNE CHARTRAND*
Fight Choreographer	JACQUELINE LOEWEN
Stage Manager	ROBERT PEL
Assistant Stage Manager #1	KATHRYN BALL
Assistant Stage Manager #2	HEATHER LEE BRERETON
Apprentice Stage Manager	TIA MORANN
Set/Projections Designer	T. ERIN GRUBER*
Costume Designer	DEANNA FINNMAN*
Costume Cultural Consultant	EVAN DUCHARME*
Lighting Designer	SCOTT HENDERSON
Adult Chorus	STEVE DENBY*
Children's Chorus	JENNIFER ENGBRECHT*
Répétiteur	TADEUSZ BIERNACKI

*Manitoba Opera debut



The intricate set pieces create elevated tiers that singers, dancers, and other performers must navigate as they move about the stage.

INTRODUCTION & SYNOPSIS

LI KEUR SUMMARY

Place: The heart of the continent
Time: Present day and the 1870s
Languages: Southern Michif, French-Michif, Anishinaabemowin, French, and English

“This work is entirely of my imagination and cannot be construed as an historic account despite a foundation of extensive primary archival and secondary research of the 19th century, extensive engagement with the land, with the Michif peoples, and our kinship networks of the 21st century throughout our homeland. Any mistakes or omissions are entirely mine. Any linguistic mistakes are entirely mine.” – Suzanne Steele

Li Keur is an invitation to visit. It is almost winter, a time when stories stalk the earth. In dreamlike sequences, Joséphine-Marie, and her beloved grandmother Mémère tell us a favourite family story, one told to give comfort in troubled times.

It imagines the becoming of the Métis peoples and introduces a mystical, historic past that exists in the present in the form of ‘ghost’ or ‘ancestor’ choruses. Thus, Joséphine-Marie and her family situate themselves at the heart of the continent as Métis peoples.

The opening act introduces us to the Black Geese of Fate, agents of change and the main protagonists; the Anishinaabeg knowledge keeper,

Marie Serpente; Josette, a young Michif sharpshooter and runaway; Marguerite Monet dit Belhumeur; and the historic Louis Riel living out his fate. We also meet Baptiste Robideau, a buffalo guide who may or may not be the younger Riel.

We then transition from the mystic to “reality” as Joséphine-Marie is startled awake from her story-dream into the present. Far from home, she struggles with her studies and sense of identity until she is visited by her darling Mémère who helps her navigate this difficult time through more story, this time of a young woman sharpshooter of the 1870s at the last bison hunts and her love for a buffalo guide named Baptiste Robideau.

The story within a story begins in the 1870s Red River at a dance. We learn Josette is being bargained over by her father, Pierre LaGrande to an old trader, Jacques LaCrosse, who wants her in marriage. Josette, an independent spirit, refuses to be a part of this, switches clothing with her best friend Rose, and runs away south across the Medicine Line (the US/Canada border) with Robideau, who has been hired to take a wealthy English aristocrat to the last bison hunts.

Joining them are Marie Serpente, a dear friend of Josette’s from childhood, and LaRoche, a Canadjenn (Quebecois), Marie’s love partner and Robideau’s guide



Dozens of individually cut-out bird shapes will adorn elevated scenery suspended from wires above the stage.

INTRODUCTION & SYNOPSIS

partner. The quartet journey to St. Paul, fetch their Englishman, then meet the buffalo hunts of Pembina and Ile. Marie. Josette babysits the Englishman while Robideau and LaRoche come and go over the Medicine Line to do “business.”

Over the course of the opera, we encounter bison brigades, smugglers, attend kitchen parties filled with jiggers and fiddlers, and take in a boxing match!

Overarching narratives encompass 21st century Joséphine-Marie’s reckoning with identity, 1885 Riel’s historic reckoning with his fate as he sits in his jail cell playing crib with his jailers, and a love triangle. All the while, the Black Geese of Fate manipulate, play with, or torment every character, including us!

In the final act, we come to the ‘historic’ Riel and face the terrible challenges of the 1880s for Indigenous peoples at the heart of the continent, themes 21st century peoples will recognize: refugeehood, environmental degradation, political insecurities, and much more.

But this work is meant first and foremost as a celebration of the independence and fortitude of the Métis peoples and our kinship networks at Li Keur, the heart of the continent, and in particular, how the women have sewn and mended our cultures and our challenges - traits that Joséphine-Marie will take with her well into the 21st century as she prepares for her own leadership guided by stories of Josette, Mémère, Riel, and the Black Geese of Fate!



Li Keur cast, creative team, translators, and Manitoba Opera staff meet together for the first time to workshop the opera in August, 2023.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

Mémère (aka MM or Alphonsine): a Michif matriarch, grandmother of Joséphine-Marie (JM)

Joséphine-Marie (JM): the narrator, young Métis scholar, MM's grand-daughter (21st century)

Louis Riel: age 28 - 41 (1870s - 1885)/Baptiste Robideau: age 27-31, rumoured to be Riel under an assumed name when living in Montana and the Dakotas (1870s)

Josette LaGrande: a young Métis woman of 20-28, a trader's daughter, well-educated at the same convent school as Riel in his early years, a friend of Sara Riel's, she is an excellent hunter and sharpshooter. (1870s-80s)

Marie Serpente: an Anishinaabe knowledge keeper, a woman of 20-28, she speaks French, Anishinaabemowin, Cree, Michif, some English, and is a skilled woman of medicine. She embodies the love of friendship and loyalty to Josette. Her husband à la façon du pays is LaRoche. (1870s-80s)

Marguerite Monet dit Belhumeur Riel: age 19, a young daughter from an important buffalo hunting family. She marries Riel during his self-exile in Montana. (1880s)

Rose: Josette's best friend in St. Boniface, from the convent school, an orphan with brothers. (1870s-80s)

LaRoche: a Canadjenn (French Canadian) navigator, guide, translator, Baptiste Robideau's best friend in Montana. (1870s-80s)

L'Anglaise: a young aristocrat from the south of England, sent to Canada for a few years to get him out of England where he has been involved in scandal. It is his diary, located in the North Dakota State Archives, that provided the central love story of his work. We do not know who he was. (1870s)

Four Black Geese of Fate: these transformative figures include two fiddlers and two dancers/singers. They inhabit multiple characters of people who alter the course of lives. (Timeless)

Pierre LaGrande: Josette's father, a former buffalo hunter and now landholder, trader, trying hard to sell his independent, wilful daughter. (1870s)

Jacques LaCrosse: widower, wealthy old trader from Qu'Appelle Valley bartering for Josette's hand, father of 13 children. (1870s)

François Gaudry: Josette's betrothed (ten years after the Montana scenes). (1880s)

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS



PAULETTE DUGUAY

MÉMÈRE

Born and raised in St. Boniface, Manitoba, Paulette comes from a long line of proud French Red River Métis from her mother's side and a French-Canadian paternal background.

Theatre has always been an integral part of her life and she's enjoyed being in the cast of several productions with Théâtre Cercle Molière, Maison Gabrielle-Roy, and special event productions.

Paulette holds the Métis nation close to her heart and devotes much of her time as president of l'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, the oldest Métis organization in the country dating back to 1887.

She is also a grateful mother of five and a Mamie to 10 grandchildren. Fun fact: Paulette's great grandmother, Eulalie, was Louis Riel's sister.



CHARLENE VAN BUEKENHOUT

JOSÉPHINE-MARIE / NARRATOR

Charlene (she/her or Char) is a Métis/Belgian/Canadian theatre artist residing in Treaty One territory/Winnipeg. She is the Artistic Producer of Echo Theatre, an actor, theatre creator, and emerging director.

Her Michif language show for young audiences, *Minoosh Doo-Kapeeshiw* (about a cat who goes camping), was featured at the 2022 Winnipeg Fringe Festival, the Indigenous Languages of Manitoba Festival, and the Métis Elders and Youth Gathering in Selkirk, Manitoba. Charlene is part of the development of a Southern

Michif play *Doo-Pashkishok Lii Padrii* (about acquiring tasty partridges for dinner).

Kichi marsii to the team for inviting me to be part of this story. Marsii ma famiyy, Kevin pi Phoebe, pi kahkiyaaw lii Michifs past, present, and future. Wahkohtowin. Ekoshi!

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS (CONTINUED)



EVAN KORBUT

LOUIS RIEL/ROBIDEAU

Evan Korbuto is an Anishinaabe baritone from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and Garden River (Robinson Treaty/Crown Treaty 60), traditional home of the Anishinaabe.

He began studying at Western University in 2007, completed his Bachelor's Degree in Music (voice performance) in 2011 and completed his Master's Degree in Music (voice) in 2014.

Recent credits include *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* (Jaimie Paul, world premiere), *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (Moses), *Shanawdithit* (Simms/Spirit Chorus, world premiere), *Two Odysseys: Pimootewin/Gállábáárnit* (Hunter/Chorus, world premiere), *The Flight of the Hummingbird* (Owl), *Adriana Lecouvreur* (Michonnet), *Missing* (Angus/Native Student), and *Don Giovanni* (Leporello).

Evan is excited to be singing the roles of Riel and Robideau.



REBECCA CUDDY

JOSETTE LA GRANDE

Métis mezzo-soprano Rebecca Cuddy is acknowledged as 'the next generation who are going to do incredible things' (*The Whole Note*, 2019). This season Rebecca will appear with Soundstreams, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Symphony New Brunswick, and as a member of The IndigiDivas with Allegra Chamber Orchestra and Calgary Philharmonic. She will also premiere *Bulrushes* with West Edge Opera in Cincinnati.

Last season, Rebecca returned to Pacific Opera Victoria for Braunfels' *Die Vögel*. In concert she appeared with Soundstreams (premiere - Frehner's *L.E.X.*), the New Orford String Quartet, the Toronto Consort, and performed with members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Jeremy Dutcher and Yo-Yo Ma in support of Toronto's CAMH Centre.

Rebecca attended Western University and the Royal Academy of Music for voice studies. She is the 2022 graduate of the Indigenous Artist Residency at the National Theatre School of Canada.

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS (CONTINUED)



KEELY MCPEEK MARIE SERPENTE

Keely McPeck (she/her) is a member of the Oji-Cree Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation in Northwestern Ontario, with Irish and German settler roots. She holds a Bachelor of Music and Post-Baccalaureate in Vocal Performance from the Desautels

Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba.

Winning the Rainbow Stage Trophy at the Winnipeg Music Festival encouraged her stage performance career. You may have seen Keely in Manitoba Theatre for Young People's recent seven-month tour of *Frozen River*, Dry Cold's production of *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, or the Winnipeg Fringe Festival.



JULIE LUMSDEN ROSE/MARGUERITE

Julie Lumsden is a proud member of the Manitoba Métis Federation, with Scottish and German settler ancestry. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Classical Voice Performance from the University of Manitoba Desautels Faculty of Music.

She has just finished her fifth season at Shaw Festival, starring as Louise/Gypsy Rose Lee in *Gypsy: A Musical Fable*. During her time at Shaw she has been heralded as "luminous" (The Globe and Mail), "particularly compelling" (The New York Times) and giving a "tour

de force performance" (Broadway World).

Julie has also performed on stages including those of RMTC, PTE, MTYP, Rainbow Stage, Théâtre Cercle Molière, Magnus Theatre, and Neptune Theatre. She is a Juno Award nominee for her work with Against the Grain/The Banff Centre's *Messiah/Complex*.

Julie dedicates her performance of this role in honour of her grandfathers, Alden and Charles, who have blessed her with her most treasured gifts: the gift of song and the gift of community.

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS (CONTINUED)



JAMES MCLENNAN
LA CROSSE/THE ENGLISHMAN

Born and raised in Winnipeg, James McLennan has performed on opera stages across Canada in a career spanning close to two decades. Highlights include Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville* with Edmonton Opera, Luther Billis in *South Pacific* with Calgary Opera, and Jeune Bilodeau in the world premiere of *Les Feluettes* with l'Opéra de Montréal and Pacific Opera Victoria.

Local appearances include Goro in *Madama Butterfly*, Bardolfo in *Falstaff* and Little Bat in *Susannah* at Manitoba Opera, Orphée in *Orphée et Eurydice* with Manitoba Underground Opera, and Handel's *Messiah* with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Last year, he made his UK debut at London's Southbank Centre in Soundstreams' *Musik für das Ende*, a production directed by Chris Abraham featuring the music of Canadian composer Claude Vivier.

James has served as a vocal instructor at both the University of Manitoba and Brandon University. He is also a certified French translator.



NOLAN KEHLER
LA ROCHE

Treaty One-based tenor Nolan Kehler brings an infectious energy to the stage. Equally at home on both the concert and operatic stages, Nolan recently made his American debuts with American Bach Soloists and Emmanuel Music in Boston.

A performer dedicated to collaborative reconciliation, Nolan has had the pleasure of working with Juno-nominated Cree composer Andrew Balfour on his compositions *Captive* and *Nôtinikêw* last year in performances with Winnipeg's Dead of Winter at the Montreal New Music Festival and with Edmonton's Chronos Vocal Ensemble.

Nolan serves as provincial coordinator for the Manitoba chapter of Opera InReach, an organization which provides accessible opera education to schools from a wide variety of perspectives and backgrounds in Canadian vocal music. Nolan can also be heard on weekends over the airwaves on CBC Radio One introducing curated classical music selections across Canada.

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS (CONTINUED)



DAVID WATSON
PIERRE LA GRANDE

Bass-baritone David Watson is a veteran of opera and concert stages across Canada and continues to earn praise for the richness and power of his voice.

His recent appearance in last season's *Così fan tutte* marked David's 51st production with Manitoba Opera. His mainstage debut was as Baron Duphol in the Sunday matinee of *La Traviata* in 1979.

He has also performed with the Canadian Opera Company, the opera companies of Vancouver, Calgary Edmonton, Saskatchewan, Hamilton, as well as with Pacific Opera Victoria, Opera Lyra Ottawa, and Rainbow Stage.



MICHELLE LAFFERTY
BLACK GOOSE #1

Dora Award winner mezzo-soprano Michelle Lafferty is from Tłıch'ó Nation Northwest Territories and now resides in Calgary, Alberta. She is involved, on an ongoing basis, with The Banff Centre for the Performing Arts program Indigenous Classical Musicians Gathering, Calgary Opera's Lab production of *Namwayut*, and Soundstreams production of *Two Odysseys: Pimootewin/Gállábártnit* in 2020.

In 2022, she performed in "Kisaageetin," a concert of Tomson Highway's works with the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. She is also part of a new emerging group of illustrious Indigenous women "The Indigidivas" production, with financial support by Allegra Chamber Orchestra with Janna Sailor. In January 2023, she had her American debut with the role of Mother in Brian Current and Marie Clements' opera *Missing* with Anchorage Opera, Alaska. This past September, she performed with Unsettled Scores in their opera *Canoe* by Dr. Spy Dénommé-Welch and Catherine Magowan.

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS (CONTINUED)



SCOTT RUMBLE
BLACK GOOSE #2

This season includes a return to Opéra de Montréal as Descartes (cover) in the world premiere of Bilodeau's *La reine-garçon* and as Arrigo in Voicebox: Opera in Concert's production of Verdi's *La battaglia de Legnano*. Last season highlights included a role debut as Steuermann in Vancouver Opera's *The Flying Dutchman*; covering the lead role of Göring in the world premiere of *La beauté du monde* for Opéra de Montréal; and singing Jason in Cherubini's *Medée* for Opera in Concert, having sung Anatol in their 2022 production of

Barber's *Vanessa*.

Scott is an alumnus of Calgary Opera's Emerging Artist Development Program and the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artist Program at Vancouver Opera. Other recent appearances include *A Waltz Dream* with Toronto Operetta Theatre, Mozart's *Requiem* with the Vancouver Bach Choir, Ferrando in Brott Opera's drive-in production of *Così fan tutte*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Brott Festival.



ALEX KUSTUROK
BLACK GOOSE (FIDDLE)

Growing up, Alex followed his mother Patti to old time dances around Manitoba where he was enriched with the Métis fiddle from a young age.

His career highlights include travelling with the Métis delegation to Rome to meet with Pope Francis, Celtic Colours International Festival, Heritage Classic in Edmonton, Alberta, and two top-three finishes at the Canadian Grand Masters.

THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS (CONTINUED)



MELISSA ST. GODDARD
BLACK GOOSE (FIDDLE)

Melissa St. Goddard is a Métis fiddler from Portage la Prairie. With family roots in the Métis community of St. Ambroise, she grew up surrounded by the sounds of the fiddle, which led her to start playing the instrument herself.

Over the years she has had the opportunity to perform at events across the country such as Back to Batoche Days, the Indspire Awards, Indigenous Day Live, and many more. She not only performs, but has dedicated herself to passing on traditional Métis fiddle playing to

the next generation by teaching.

THE CREATIVE TEAM



DR. SUZANNE M. STEELE

LIBRETTIST

Suzanne Steele is an award-winning poet, installation artist, scholar, editor, and writer. She is a librettist (opera architect) and co-founder, with Drs. Monique Giroux and Michelle Porter, of the Red River Jig Network project (www.redriverjig.com).

Dr. Steele has a PhD from Exeter University (UK), an MLIS from UWO, and a BMus (voice) from UBC. She is co-director of the multi-year *Li Keur* project with Neil Weisensel. Her war requiem (with composer Jeff Ryan), *Afghanistan: Requiem for a Generation*, will be released

commercially in 2023. This work is based on her experience as a Canadian war artist with the First Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2008-10). She is represented by Ian Arnold of Catalyst.



NEIL WEISENSEL

CO-COMPOSER AND CONDUCTOR

Composer and conductor Neil Weisensel, one of the most frequently performed and prolific opera composers in Canada, is a white settler from French and German ancestry. Neil is part of the music faculty at Canadian Mennonite University, where he teaches Music Theory, Composition and Music Technology.

As a composer he is well-versed in a multiplicity of styles and genres and has written music for feature film, television, documentaries and international multi-media installations. Neil's eight operas, including four early

works with librettist/director Michael Cavanagh that remain in the repertory, have seen over 200 total performances across Canada and the U.S.

With his wife, Rachel Landrecht, Neil co-composed and performed an original song for former U.S. President Bill Clinton in Vancouver, and the duo has also provided keynote musical presentations for Oscar winner Al Gore and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Neil also had an exclusive engagement performing solo piano at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, and his big band collaboration with superstar Michael Bublé earned them multiple award nominations. (Composition) and from the University of Manitoba (Piano Performance).

THE CREATIVE TEAM (CONTINUED)



ALEX KUSTUROK CO-COMPOSER

Growing up, Alex followed his mother Patti to old time dances around Manitoba where he was enriched with the Métis fiddle from a young age.

His career highlights include travelling with the Métis delegation to Rome to meet with Pope Francis, Celtic

Colours International Festival, Heritage Classic in Edmonton, Alberta, and two top-three finishes at the Canadian Grand Masters.



SIMON MIRON STAGE DIRECTOR

Simon Miron is a two-spirited, francophone Métis, multi-disciplinary artist from Treaty One Territory. Their ancestry includes the Ladéroute, Pontbriand, and Sansregret families.

They are interested in making weird art that encourages growth and challenges the boundaries of their own theatre practices. They hold a master's degree from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and also studied in Edmonton, Toronto, and The Stratford Festival. They are a founding member of the Village Conservatory for

Music Theatre, a local performing arts education program.

Directing credits include *The Post Mistress* (RMTC/Belfry), *Pippin* (ViC/WST), *American Idiot*, *Young Frankenstein* (WST), *Lucky Stiff* (MDA), *The Seat Next to the King*, *Whatever Happens After*, *The Last 48*, *Songs for a New World*, *7 Stories*, *The Last Five Years* (WPGfringe).

Simon will be directing RMTC's production of *The Piano Teacher* this February.

THE FIDDLE

By Monique Giroux, PhD

The fiddle is integral to *Li Keur* as an instrument and genre of music that has always been with the Métis peoples. As an instrument that is easy to carry across great distances, fiddles were not only used in homes for house parties (referred to as bush parties south of the medicine line), but they were also brought on buffalo brigades, played in the evenings for on-the-prairie dances after a long day's travel. In this style of fiddling, the constant "one-beat" feel permeates (like the heartbeat drum). The crooked structure of many of the traditional and contemporary tunes furthermore allows for individuality and a degree of flexibility within the framework of the constant beat. Each fiddler can make the tune their own and can adapt a tune to a particular place and time. Along with the languages heard in the opera, the fiddle helps to recreate Red River's 19th century soundscape while emphasizing a practice that continues to hold deep meaning for prairie Indigenous families today. Though the sound and style of playing is important, other non-aesthetic elements are valued within the tradition. These elements include relationship, story, healing, spiritual practice, and responsibility.

Fiddling as Relationship

The concept of relationship is embedded in many aspects of Métis fiddling. Tune names often reference people, places, or events, and fiddlers might refer to a tune by the name of the person who used to play the tune (e.g., *Uncle Jim*). A contemporary example of this practice is a tune written by the opera's co-composer, Alex Kusturok, named *Evie Kusturok's Square Dance*, named for Kusturok's son. The importance of relationships is also evident in the connection between fiddler and dancer. Because Métis tunes are often flexible—that is, the fiddler can lengthen or shorten a tune as they wish—

fiddlers are able to adapt their playing to the dancer, just as the dancer adapts to the fiddler.

Fiddling also strengthens and expresses family relationships. Many families have their own unique style of playing that is passed on through the generations, with each individual fiddler making it their own (i.e., individuality within a familial style). In the past, fiddlers were often men, but it was not unusual for mothers to play an important role in passing down tunes. In an interview from 1957 now housed at the Canadian Museum of History, fiddler Jim Pelletier notes, for example, that his mother would sing tunes to him and have him play them on the fiddle until he got them just right. Though fiddling is perhaps most strongly associated with the Métis peoples, many aspects of the tradition are shared with First Nations, including Nêhiyaw and Anishinaabe peoples. In this way, fiddling is a practice that connects families and extended kinship networks; through these relationships, it carries the histories of the land and the peoples.



Co-composer, Alex Kusturok, with his mother, Patti Kusturok. Photo: Ross Pambrun. Used with permission.

THE FIDDLE (CONTINUED)

Fiddling as Story

Just as story work is important to beading, storying is also a vital part of the Métis fiddle tradition. The names of tunes tell stories about people(s) and places. Some of the tunes even have longer stories that live alongside the tune, teaching community values. These include stories about the *Duck Dance* and *Rabbit Dance*, and of course stories about the *Red River Jig*, a tune that will be heard in *Li Keur*. More broadly, the fiddle is the story of the Métis peoples. Though it came from Europe, as do some of the tunes played by Métis fiddlers, it grew into its own on the Prairies, and expresses Indigenous approaches to form (in its crooked structure), rhythm (especially its one-beat feel), and melody (which in tunes like the *Red River Jig* feature an overall descending melody line). It embodies the story of the Métis peoples born of the Prairies. The importance of story was expressed by Alex Kusturok at a fiddle camp in the Cypress Hills in 2023, when he told his students that the story was just as important as the tune, urging his students to keep telling the stories. It is fitting that the fiddle is weaved into the story that is *Li Keur*.

Fiddling as Joy, Healing, and Spiritual Practice

Traditionally, Métis families would clear furniture from their homes to make room for hosting a fiddle and dance gathering. The fiddle brought people together in community, just as in *Li Keur*, and it continues to bring Métis people together today. It is in this sense a form of social music. Yet for many, it is also a spiritual practice for healing. A dancer might jig (i.e., dance) as a prayer for a sick relative or as a prayer for other kinds of healing. The melodic shape of the *Red River Jig* (beginning on high pitches and moving downward) is indicative of this

aspect of Métis fiddling—a calling on the Creator through melody—as is the traditional footwork of dancers, who tread lightly on the earth. Within a holistic understanding of healing, the joy and community facilitated through fiddle and dance is, likewise, an essential aspect of its healing practice.

Fiddling as Responsibility

Because the fiddle plays such an important role in Métis communities, those who are able to play are often expected to play. As Peter Erasmus wrote in his book *Buffalo Days and Nights*, as a fiddler (in the late 19th century), he was expected to do his share, contributing his music to a dance. This is an observation that contemporary fiddlers continue to note: if you can fiddle, you do. Fiddling in this way is a responsibility, one that is needed for the well-being of the community.



This fiddle was made by John Arcand and carved by Bill Kalyn. Photo copyright : Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 7, 2007

RECENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES THROUGH BEADWORK

By Nicole Stonyk, with mention and gratitude to Jennine Krauchi and Sherry Farrell-Racette

Indigenous beadwork is a significant component of cultural expression. After falling out of predominance due to various factors including cultural loss through residential and day schools, disenfranchisement, displacement and racism, beadwork is now seeing a resurgence amongst contemporary artists. In conversation with Jennine Krauchi, Métis bead artist, she noted it was not long ago only a few could be seen beading around a table, and now you can fill entire halls! This resurgence illuminates not only the aesthetic artform itself, but importantly its (re)connection to story, relationships, healing, and joy. Beadwork is a central component of historical Métis culture and served as a commercial economy for Métis women, but it also represents the story of a collective community, identity, expressed love, gift-giving, and social visibility.



Design by Jennine Krauchi. Métis beadwork above features “mouse tracks” - small tracks protruding along the floral stem.

There are a variety of beadwork styles and patterns that are related towards various Indigenous nations, and many share the five-petal floral pattern. However, Métis floral patterns are different in style than Cree or Ojibwe and are distinct through the infusion of French embroidery. A marked feature of Métis-style floral patterns is the accompaniment of “mouse tracks.”

Krauchi notes there is a lot of love and joy that is put into beadwork in which nothing else quite signifies Métis culture more than beadwork. In fact, when creating a piece, you must have “good thoughts” and think of who you are beading for with each bead sewn. Without good thoughts, it will show in the work which will have to be undone the next day! Krauchi notes that not every piece of beadwork tells a specific story, but is a connection between the maker and the beadwork itself. It could simply be for the pure enjoyment. Beadwork is also a personal style in which the maker becomes apparent through observing the design and beading pattern.

Sherry Farrell-Racette, interdisciplinary Métis scholar in the arts, discusses recentring the voices of women and their stories through material culture in her dissertation, “Sewing Ourselves Together” (2004). Farrell-Racette demonstrates how beadwork was used to represent the daily lives of Métis people that linked the hands and hearts of women and was also a communal effort involving a high level of intergenerational skill. However, beadwork exists not only in a historical past but is an important part of contemporary cultural resurgence amongst contemporary artists. These artists consider their work deeply meaningful and have found joy and healing through the process of carefully designing a work, selecting the colours, the bead-type, and the act of beading itself.

RECENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES THROUGH BEADWORK (CONTINUED)

Two types of contemporary but historically inspired beadwork pieces are featured below: the Tapis and Fire Bag. These pieces will be displayed in *Li Keur* along with many other beadwork pieces from the grandmothers.

Fire Bag, or Octopus Bag

Historical beadwork functioned for aesthetic value and was also used on daily items. The Fire Bag is an example of a daily essential item for life and travel in the 19th century and was used to carry flint, a steel striker and other items needed to start a fire. The earliest Fire Bags sewn and used by Métis were primarily Saulteaux-inspired and illustrate the close cultural and kin connections they had with each other. The Fire bag became a more distinct Métis style as they were embellished with various new materials and trade goods – some of which, given the style of beadwork and materials used, can determine the region it came from or who might have beaded the bag. The Fire Bags that are commonly displayed in museums are called “Octopus” bags given their eight long tabs, or “fingers”. The Octopus Bag provided form, function,



Métis Octopus Bag installation at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

and an aesthetic medium for individual expression and are known for their vibrant colour and decorative beadwork.

This particular Octopus bag (left), created by Jennine Krauchi alongside her mother, Jenny Meyer, is considered the largest Métis beaded art piece in the world standing at over seven metres tall and weighing nearly sixty pounds. The design was beaded mainly using antique beads from the fur-trade era, but most importantly, the design features nine Métis flowers to represent nine Métis villages that were deliberately burned or destroyed to clear land for colonial expansion. The communities listed on the Octopus Bag include Ste. Madeline, Bannock Town, Crescent Lake, Crooked Lake, Little Chicago, Lestock, Katepwa, Park Valley, Round Prairie, and Rooster Town. Many of the displaced Métis families from these communities, along with others, were forced further into diaspora. For Jennine, the large beaded rose on this piece represents the survival of the Métis people.



“Octopus bags were carried by Métis men to store the needed supplies to start fires. This is a replica of the 26 foot tall bag on display at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.”
-Stephanie Cram

Watch for the “real life size” replica of Octopus bag in *Li Keur*! (right)

The Tapis or Tuppee

Red River buffalo brigades were found everywhere on the prairies during the 19th century and are featured in the story work of *Li Keur*. In addition to the buffalo brigades

RECENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES THROUGH BEADWORK (CONTINUED)

of the 19th century, there were also cart drivers used for transport of freight goods throughout the homelands. In winter months the cart drivers turned towards winter transport and used a team of sled-dogs that were the “athletes of their day.” Some of these teams averaged nearly 56 kilometers per day. The sled-dogs of the Métis were the pride of their drivers and wore the Tapis, also known as a Tuppee, made with wool or felt blankets with elaborate floral designs decorated with fringe, ribbons and bells. If you listen carefully, you can “hear” the bells of the Métis sled dogs and their Tupis in *Li Keur*!



“A painting by Peter Rindisbacher, 1820s, Red River area, showing a dog team decked out in their tuppies, bells, and standing irons.”

It was a celebration when the teams returned home from trapping or trading posts, and just before the drivers glided into town, they decorated their dogs, sleds, and themselves. The decoration was also used to show status. If trapping or trading was successful, it showed a good provider who brought in the best furs and beads. Some of the beadwork displayed 25 -30 different colours in which more beads and colour was an indicator of love. Interestingly, Métis women, who beaded for their love of family, others they cared for, their dogs and even horses with beaded pad saddles, rarely wore beadwork themselves.

This replica Tapis (right) was designed and assembled by Jennine Krauchi, and beaded by her mother, Jenny Meyer. At approx. 24” x 24”, it features antique beads in ornate and colourful floral patterns with “mouse tracks,” Beluga leather strapping with sleigh bells and wool fringe. The Tapis was beaded as a family gift with inspiration coming from other pieces housed at the Manitoba Museum.



“*Li Keur* features many other beaded pieces that show the work of the grandmothers. Incorporating the grandmothers work connects their hand and hearts to contemporary audiences and contributes to *Li Keur*’s overall theme of re-centering women, celebration, love, and gives a sense of the cultural milieu that encompassed the heart of the continent in the mid 19th century. It also connects the aesthetic visual and story work of *Li Keur* that centres collective identities of women and as a metaphoric means to “stitch ourselves together.”



“Laika” proudly wears the Tapis her ancestors would have worn.

LI KEUR'S LINGUISTIC SOUNDSCAPE

*By Nicole Stonyk with mention and gratitude to the translators, and contributions from Dr. Suzanne Steele's essay, *Li Keur Aesthetic Translation of Indigenous Languages Database**

Li Keur re-imagines the 19th century in the heart of the north and will be a different experience for the regular operagoer. Typically, operas are written in German, Italian and French. However, 70% of the text in *Li Keur* is written in Indigenous languages: Southern-Michif, French-Michif and Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe).

Language is very important in communicating culture and world views. In fact, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples declared: "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons" (Article 13:1). For Dr. Suzanne Steele, Métis librettist for *Li Keur*, it was important to emulate the linguistic soundscape of the 19th century. It was also a creative and powerful tool to connect language, story and visiting that is central to Indigenous culture.

The Indigenous language translations in *Li Keur* are not direct translations. Rather, *Li Keur* uses aesthetic translations. This means the libretto reflects worldviews of the languages but also the artistic image of the original text. In this way the translations are specific to the story of *Li Keur*. Dr. Steele wanted to work with languages in a way that reflected the prairie kinship webs across the heart of the continent at a time when the ancestors spoke many languages – up to five or even seven! Many were translators and navigators and would often switch between languages in conversation, and sometimes even mid-sentence. Languages are used in the same way in *Li Keur*.

Here is an example (hint: listen for these words sung by the women's chorus and Marie Serpente in the opening scenes):

Southern-Michif

Kaashki kwaashonaan [We sew]

Lii roozh faroosh [wild roses]

Kaashki kwaashonaan [We sew]

French-Michif

On ko di roz savaj [We sew the wild roses]

avek di sway ipi lii riban Japonaise [With silk threads and Japanese ribbons]

Anishinaabemowin

Wiigashk gogimaandan, minoma-got [Sweetgrass, I smell it, it smells good]

Nitaawigiwin izhimaagot [the scent of rebirth]



Translators work with Charlene Van Buekenhout (Joséphine-Marie) and Paulette Duguay (Mémère) at a workshop for *Li Keur*, August, 2023.

The above example of Southern-Michif, French-Michif and Anishinaabemowin adds to *Li Keur's* theme of re-centering culture by recreating the cultural milieu through language that

LI KEUR'S LINGUISTIC SOUNDSCAPE (CONTINUED)

encompassed the heart of the continent in the mid 19th century.

The translations and linguistic soundscape are important, but so is community. Therefore, working with translators and language knowledge keepers in a way that builds community was very important in the story creation for *Li Keur*. To do this properly, community protocols had to be followed and building relationships through “visiting”. Visiting means slowing down, spending the time, and doing things “right.” The act of visiting creates space for stories, shared knowledge, and building relationships that move beyond the final performance. It took over 3.5 years of visiting and many kitchen tables for the translation work alone! Dr. Steele writes about other ways that *Li Keur* involves visiting with audience members, performers, and creatives. Dr. Steele writes that these aspects of visiting “are working towards a performance; but the reality is that the making is itself performative, and, potentially historic or ground-breaking as a baby step of reconciliation.”

Language Revitalization as Reconciliation



Translators and Language Keepers for *Li Keur*, along with cast members, August 2023.

Li Keur is a project aimed towards truth and reconciliation which calls on Indigenous language revitalization as part of the 94 Calls to Action. Therefore, an important outcome of the translation project was not only for the story, but to create a language archive and database. The result was a website with free podcasts, language



Cast, creative team, Translators, and Language Keepers, *Li Keur* Workshop, August 2023.

videos, and audio of words and phrases used in the opera, as well as studio recordings. This is not only meant for those performing in the opera, but as a public resource and for language community members. Check out the website here: <https://omeka.cmu.ca/s/Riel-Heart-of-the-North/page/welcome1>

The Indigenous language specialists who translated the librettos must be acknowledged. They are:

Cree-Michif: Madame Verna de Montigny (Brandon, MB)

French-Michif: June Bruce, Lorraine Coutu, and Agathe Chartrand, Andrea Rose, Suzanne Zeke, (late) Joyce Dumont, and Jules Chartrand (St Laurent, MB)

Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe): Donna Beach and Debra Beach Ducharme (Animo-ziibiing [Lake Manitoba First Nation])

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Curriculum Connections to the Manitoba Curriculum Frameworks for Grade 9 - 12 are provided below each activity. For a more in-depth look at the connections, view our Manitoba Curriculum Connections documents at <http://mbopera.ca/school-programs/study-guides/>

ACTIVITY #1 USING THE FIVE C'S

Have Your Students Analyze the Opera as Drama

CHARACTERS

Are they interesting? Believable? Are their actions, words, thoughts consistent?

CONCLUSION

How well does the conclusion work? Is it consistent? Satisfying? Believable?

CONFLICT

What conflicts are established? How are they resolved?

CONTEXT

What are the historical, physical, and emotional settings? Sets and costumes?

CLIMAX

To what climax does the conflict lead?

DIRECTIONS

- Give students the synopsis to read and have them re-tell the story after they have read it.
- Ask comprehensive questions.
- Present and discuss the composer and librettist.
- Listen to excerpts from the opera. Watch a DVD of the opera. Have students identify and recognize recurring themes.
- Discuss the historical background, emphasizing the visual and performing arts and history-social science frameworks. Discuss the results of certain events. Whom did they affect? How? Why? Did any changes occur as a result?
- Review the glossary of terms.
- Have the students watch for references to themes in the opera in their everyday lives. The internet, radio, TV, magazines, and movies often refer back to classics.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.2.1; 2.1.2; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M2; DR-C1; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-M2; M-C2; M-R1

ACTIVITY #2 CREATE A PRODUCTION

- Choose a time and place to set your production.
- Have the students design a poster for *Li Keur* including such details as the date, the time, and the people involved.
- Have them draw a set for a production of the opera.
- They might also sketch a costume, wig, and makeup for a character in *Li Keur*.
- Have the students write a media release about *Li Keur* including the date, the time, the people involved, and why it would be exciting or fun to attend.
- Have the students create an ad for the opera. Include whatever you feel is the biggest “selling point” of the opera - what makes it exciting? Why should people come to see it?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.5; 2.3.4; 4.1.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-C2; DR-C3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2; M-C3

ACTIVITY #3 A REVIEW

STEP 1 THINK-GROUP-SHARE

Individually, students will write, in point-form, the answers to the following questions:

- What did you like about the opera?
What did you dislike?
- What did you think about the sets, props, and costumes?
- If you were the stage director, would you have done something differently? Why?
- What were you expecting? Did it live up to your expectations?
- What did you think of the singers' portrayal of their characters?

Break the students into groups to discuss their feelings and reactions to the production. Have the students write on poster papers their answers or important points of their discussion. Encourage the students to go beyond the questions posed.

STEP 2 CLASS DISCUSSION

Have the whole class examine the poster papers and discuss the different ideas from each group.

STUDENT RESOURCES

STEP 3 OUTLINING YOUR REVIEW

Go over the essential aspects of a review including a clearly stated purpose, a coherent comparison/contrast organizational pattern, a summary paragraph capturing the interest of the reader, precise nouns, and revision for consistency of ideas. You might give your students a few samples of reviews for arts events – or ask them to bring in some reviews they find themselves. Have the students fill out the review outline, then complete a rough draft.

- Purpose (why are you writing this and who is your audience?)
- Plot Synopsis (including who sang what role, etc.)
- Paragraph 1 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Paragraph 2 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Paragraph 3 (compare and contrast things you liked or didn't like)
- Summary/Closing Paragraph

STEP 4 PEER CONFERENCING

Students will exchange reviews to critique and edit. Encourage the students to focus on effective coordination of ideas in sentences and the correct use of grammar and punctuation.

STEP 5 CREATING THE FINAL DRAFT

Have students make the appropriate adjustments to their reviews. You could also have the students type the pieces and organize them into a newspaper.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.2.2; 3.1.3; 3.3.1; 4.1.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.4.1; 4.2.2; 5.2.1; 5.1.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R1; DR-R2; DR-R3; DR-R4

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R1; M-R2; M-R3; M-R4

ACTIVITY #4 ACT OUT THE STORY

Have students consider the characters and the role they play in the story. Choose one of the following:

**MÉMÈRE / JOSÉPHINE-MARIE / JOSETTE / MARIE SERPENTE / LOUIS RIEL /
MARGUERITE / ROSE / LAROCHE**

If you were going to play this character, you would have to discover, create, and imagine background, personality, and physical qualities. Some clues are provided in the story and the music and some you need to make up yourself.

PRETEND YOU ARE THAT CHARACTER AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What motivates you? How does this affect your actions? What obstacles stand in your way?
- What steps in the opera do you take to achieve your objectives? What are the results?
- What obstacles are beyond your control (laws, social status, others' actions)?
- What are your (character's) greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses?
- What is your relationship to the other characters?
- How is your character's personality expressed through the music of the opera?
- Can you think of a modern-day character who has similar characteristics and traits?
- If your character were alive today, how would s/he be more or less successful?
- What different steps would s/he take to achieve an objective?

ACTIVITY #5 WRITE A LETTER

Have the students choose a moment in the story and have one character write a letter to another. Explore how they would be feeling about the events of the day.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.2; 1.1.3; 2.3.5; 4.2.2; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R3

ACTIVITY #6 CAST *LI KEUR*

Have the students cast modern-day singers or bands as the performers in *Li Keur*. Who did you choose? What are their costumes like? What did you base your decisions on?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.1; 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 4.1.2; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M1; DR-C3; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2; M-R4

ACTIVITY #7 RESEARCH AND REPORT

Have the students study the history and culture of Manitoba at the time that *Li Keur* is set. What authors were popular? What scientific discoveries were being made? How did the social and political life in Manitoba compare to that elsewhere in Canada at the time?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.2.1; 2.2.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.3; 3.2.2; 3.2.3; 4.3.1; 4.3.2; 4.3.3; 4.2.2; 4.2.3; 5.2.2

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-C2

Music Curriculum Connections: M-C2

ACTIVITY #8 *LI KEUR* MOOD BOARD

Often before artists and designers create their work, they make a mood board to set the tone for the piece. This is usually a poster-sized piece of paper covered in images and words, usually from the pages of magazines and newspapers, that together communicates the complex mood of the piece in a way that words can't. It's the same as making a collage, except a mood board is for the purpose of communicating a focused concept.

Have your students go through a stack of old magazines and newspapers to create a mood board for *Li Keur*. They can create one each or work together on a large one for the class. Consider elements like colours, textures, phrases, faces, patterns, and images that represent the opera.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 2.3.5; 2.3.4; 2.2.3; 4.1.1; 4.1.2; 4.1.3; 4.4.1; 5.1.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-M3; DR-R3

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R2

ACTIVITY #9 MUSICAL INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE

STEP 1 PREPARE A MUSICAL OUTLINE

Working in small groups, have your students choose a play, novel, or story that they've read and think about how they'd go about adapting it into an opera. Have them write out an outline and try to structure the beginnings of the opera. Which parts of the drama would be highlighted with which types of music? Would they have a large chorus to back up the principal singers or would the opera be more intimate? Which singing voices (soprano, baritone, tenor, etc.) would best suit each character?

STEP 2 COMPOSE AND PERFORM AN OVERTURE

How could the elements of music (ie., rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) be used to communicate the mood of the piece within the overture? Which instruments would be used? Allow students some time to work on composing their overture based on their answers to these questions. Students can then perform their overture for the class either as a composed and rehearsed piece or improvised. Alternatively, they may choose to present their overture by describing the characteristics of the elements of the music within their piece.

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.2; 2.3.5; 2.2.1; 3.1.2; 3.1.3; 4.1.2; 4.4.3; 4.4.2; 4.2.5; 5.1.1; 5.1.2; 5.1;4

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-CR2; DR-M1; DR-M2

Music Curriculum Connections: M-CR2; M-CR3; M-M3

ACTIVITY #10 ACTIVE LISTENING

Play a few examples of the music from *Li Keur* (<https://www.rielheartofthenorth.com/video-audio/>) Ask your students to listen closely to the music and jot down their thoughts, feelings, and first impressions. Then have your students share their reactions with the classroom. Ask them to listen again and pay close attention to the elements of music (rhythm, pitch, dynamics, etc.) then explore questions such as the following:

- What are the instruments used to make the music?
- How does this music make me feel?
- What is the mood of the piece?
- What type of emotions do the singers bring forth?
- Does the music have a steady beat or pulse?
- What is the size of the ensemble?
- What do the singing voices tell us about those characters?

Language Arts Curriculum Connections: 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.2.2; 2.3.1; 2.2.3; 4.4.3; 5.2.1

Drama Curriculum Connections: DR-R1

Music Curriculum Connections: M-R2

ACTIVITY #11 OPERA POP QUIZ*

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 _____ | A theatrical production incorporating both vocal and instrumental music, drama, and sometimes dance. |
| 2 _____ | The lowest male vocal range. |
| 3 _____ | An instrument introduction to an opera. |
| 4 _____ | The area where the orchestra is seated. |
| 5 _____ | Considered the first opera. |
| 6 _____ | A song for solo voice in an opera. |
| 7 _____ | The highest female vocal range. |
| 8 _____ | A song for two voices. |
| 9 _____ | The lowest female vocal range. |
| 10 _____ | The Italian word meaning “little book.” |
| 11 _____ | The middle male vocal range. |
| 12 _____ | The person who is in charge of all the action on stage. |

*Refer to “What is Opera” Teacher’s Guide, available from mbopera.ca

ACTIVITY #12 *LI KEUR* POP QUIZ

- 1** Who composed the music for *Li Keur*? _____
- 2** Who wrote the libretto for *Li Keur*? _____
- 3** What Indigenous languages are featured in *Li Keur*? _____
- 4** Whose journal inspired the title “*Li Keur*”? _____
- 5** What stringed instrument is important to the Métis people? _____
- 6** What designs are featured prominently in Métis beadwork? _____
- 7** What does “Li Keur” mean? _____
- 8** The role of Josette is sung by what voice part? _____
- 9** In *Li Keur*, what characters represent “fate”? _____
- 10** Name one Canadian province in which *Li Keur* is set. _____
- 11** Name a state in the United States in which *Li Keur* is set. _____
- 12** What name is given to Canadian/US border in *Li Keur*? _____

ANSWER KEY POP QUIZ #11 & #12

OPERA

1. Opera
2. Bass
3. Overture
4. Orchestra Pit or “The Pit”
5. Daphne
6. Aria
7. Soprano
8. Duet
9. Contralto
10. Libretto
11. Baritone
12. Stage Director

CARMEN

1. Alex Kusturok & Neil Weisensel
2. Dr. Suzanne Steele
3. Southern-Michif, French-Michif, Anishinaabemowin
4. Louis Riel
5. Fiddle
6. Flowers
7. “The Heart”
8. Mezzo-soprano
9. 4 black geese
10. Saskatchewan
11. Montana
12. The Medicine Line

Manitoba Opera would be pleased to receive a copy of any work related to this opera produced by your students. Please forward to:

Scott Miller

Education and Outreach Coordinator
Manitoba Opera, 1060-555 Main St., Winnipeg, MB R3B 1C3

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The Daughter of the Regiment

Donizetti

A feisty orphaned tomboy raised by French soldiers must convince her "fathers" to let her marry

a peasant. A comedy with a happy ending, featuring vocal acrobatics such as the show-stopping "Ah, mes amis (Ah, my friends)."

Carmen

Bizet

Music that pulsates with the spirit of Spain, including many opera favourites such as the famous "Habanera," and the rousing Toreador Song.

The Magic Flute

Mozart

A fanciful fairytale about a prince out to win his princess with the help of a merry bird catcher.

Aida

Verdi

The grandest of grand operas, *Aida* is an epic love story about an Ethiopian princess who longs to be with Radames, leader of the Egyptian army that conquered her homeland.

La Bohème

Puccini

One of the most romantic operas of all time, a coming-of-age story about love and loss in the Latin Quarter of Paris in the 1830s.

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Manitoba Opera was founded in 1969 by a group of individuals dedicated to presenting the great works of opera to Manitoba audiences. Manitoba Opera is the province's only full-time professional opera company. The company attracts internationally renowned artists, highlights the best local talent, and is supported by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

CHORUS

The Manitoba Opera Chorus, under the direction of Chorus Master Tadeusz Biernacki, is hailed for their excellent singing and acting abilities. The chorus boasts a core of skilled singers who give generously of their time and talents. Some are voice majors at university, a few are singing teachers, but most work in jobs that aren't music related.

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