



Association for Opera in Canada

2020/21

Annual Report

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



The word “crucible” comes to mind when I look back on the past 20 months, the challenges experienced as a sector, and the extreme test we as a service association have faced in proving our necessity and demonstrating our value to an opera sector in crisis.

At the same time as increasing our service response, we expanded our constituency, embracing the whole opera sector, beyond our historical base, the professional company member. We are now over 400 strong, and I hope we have met or even exceeded the service expectations of all our members at a time when you have needed us the most.

In this annual report, you will read all about the many new projects and initiatives launched in the past year, such as the Opera Artist Relief Fund, The Opera Impact Platform Project, the RBC Future Launch Fellowship/Mentorship Program, the LINK Monthly Opera Artist Webinar Series, our Dues Relief Policy, The Future We Want Strategic Consultations (12 consultations between Oct 2020 and Jan 2021), sector webinars and zoom meetings for General Directors, Agents and Managers, Communications and Marketing staff, as well as a wealth of new resources, directories and calendars on our new website.

I am so proud of our projects and programs, but speaking personally and professionally, the biggest story of the past year has been about our people, namely all of our staff and board. You see, I have been the lone full-time employee of the association since 2008. All that changed as of July 5, 2020, after I harnessed the Wage Subsidy program to hire eight people to form the Portfolio Artist Collective on an eight-week summer contract. At the end of that summer, three stayed on permanently as associates in membership, social media and programs. In March 2021, we hired Joel Klein as our full time General Manager, and are now a fully remote four-person administrative team. We have also benefitted greatly throughout the year from the support of contractors, consultants and project managers including Sovereign State, Sue Edworthy, Coffeeshop Creative, Good Roots Consulting, Sametrica and Leading with Nice.

Our people have outperformed themselves in every way, leaping into their work with zeal and energy. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation go out to the board of directors, led by our dauntless chair Michael Mori. Their tolerance for uncertainty, willingness to have difficult conversations, and courage to make bold decisions throughout the year, has been exemplary. I value their support, expertise, oversight and stewardship of the association without which we could not have achieved what we have this year.

On the verge of the sector re-opening and the announcement of a new strategic plan centered around Equity in Opera, it is truly an honour to be able to serve the sector with all of them, in an inclusive, responsive and helpful way that strives to make everyone feel seen and heard now and into the future.

Christina Loewen
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



The Association for Opera in Canada is beginning to realize its potential as Canada's national venue for the operatic sector. This past eighteen months of crisis and reinvention for all of the performing arts, has challenged our Canadian operatic family. I am incredibly proud of Christina Loewen and more recently Joel Klein for stepping up to lead and innovate for a sector that had more questions than answers, a sector that previously was fragmented and isolated across our great geography, and over the course of the pandemic, a sector that came together under the umbrella of AOC.

As I head from the second year into the third year of my role as chair of the board, with the first two of those years dominated by the pandemic crisis, the situation has only served to underline that bringing together artists, students, independent producers, opera educators, young artist programs, major producers and all invested stakeholders is our greatest opportunity to thrive and overcome adversity. Together we faced one of the greatest challenges to the performing arts of the century, and in returning to live indoor productions this coming season, we will return to face many uncertainties... and opportunities.

The Association's long-term commitment to equity and unifying a conversation about how opera can thrive, to connecting leaders at every level, shows great promise for the future and I am proud that Christina and AOC are already leading the way.

The unprecedented growth in independent company membership and the involvement of artists reflects a changing landscape that I hope will see connections made in this 2020-2021 season, grow into increased knowledge sharing, partnerships, and innovative collaborations for our collective next chapter of opera in Canada. I hope to see you at the opera!

Michael Hidetoshi Mori
Chair of the Board of Directors

FINANCIAL REPORT

Overview

For the year ending June 30, 2021, the Association reported an operating surplus of \$132,434. Taking into consideration the change in market value of the investments, the association posts an overall surplus of \$146,143, of which the board unanimously voted to transfer in its entirety to the Board Designate Operating Reserve to protect and balance out future years' deficits and provide stability over a prolonged recovery period of projected deficits.

Highlights of the year include a substantial increase in overall budget size as result of mainly increases to our core funding, project and emergency support from the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as federal wage and rent subsidies.

Management of our investment portfolio was provided by Harbourfront Wealth Management. Our overall restricted and unrestricted net assets at year end is \$694,714.

Complete financial statements are available by request to christinal@opera.ca



SALUTE TO BOARD MEMBERS



We salute and bid adieu to two board members stepping down this year Treasurer Tim Yakimec and past-Chair Cheryl Hickman. Tim joined the board in 2016, and served as Secretary-Treasurer since 2018. Cheryl joined the board in 2013, and served as board chair from 2016 to 2019. The board and association expresses their deep appreciation and gratitude to them both for their time, energy and dedication to the opera sector.



At the 2020 Annual Meeting of Members last year, we welcomed new board member Jennifer Szeto, cofounder Musique 3 Femmes.

2020



THE PORTFOLIO ARTIST COLLECTIVE

Harnessing the Canada Wage Subsidy Program, AOC announced a new summer team in 2020 consisting of seven talented emerging artists/administrators.

Members of the Portfolio Artist Collective were: Andrew Adridge, Operations Associate, Vanessa Croome, Social Media Associate, Rebecca Cuddy, Indigenous Advisor, Jaclyn Grossman, Programs Associate, Maia Journeau, Digital and Advocacy Associate, Alex Koutelias, Membership & Fundraising Associate, Ryan McDonald, Strategic Projects Associate.

The Collective was also joined by Sue Edworthy as Communications Consultant in charge of our overall Communication strategy for our milestone 20th anniversary year.

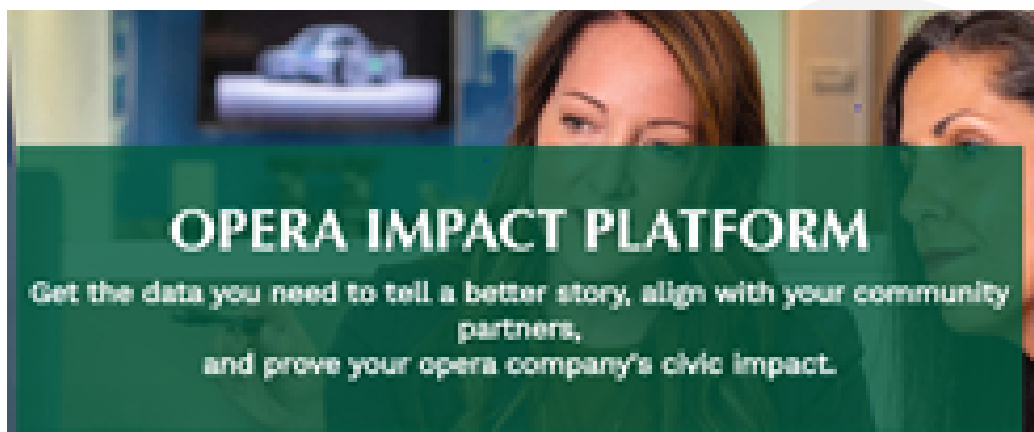
RBC FELLOWSHIP/ MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

AOC's newest program, the Fellowship/Mentorship Program was funded by RBC Future Launch and run by Jaclyn Grossman. It consisted of a 7-month Fellowship for 16 early-career Fellows as well as a 4-month Mentorship Program engaging 16 mid-career artists. The program was a great success, allowing young Canadian artists to engage in important learning, while providing a safe and open space for participants to grow and thrive. The program demonstrated the importance of connecting artists and fostering portfolio careers, leading to many new initiatives, important connections, skill development, and work opportunities.



2020 Fellows: Ana Toumine, Khadjia Mbowe, Lindsay Connolly, Alex Chen, Kyle Briscoe, D'Arcy Blunston, Allie Weintraub, Morgan Reid, Eva Stone-Barney, Anna Theodosakis, Madison Angus, Megan Miceli, Jarden Gertler-Jaffe, Antonio Bittar, Jonathan Wong, Leanne Kaufman

2020 Mentors: Jonathan Russell MacArthur, Boran Zaza, Monica Pearce, Gwenna Fairchild-Taylor, Clio Montrey, Rich Coburn, Jonathon Adams, Joel Klein, Jessica Derventzis, Debi Wong, Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野, Evan Mitchell, Rachel Krehm, Aria Umezawa, Meghan Lindsay, Jennifer Szeto



AOC received a \$400,000 multi-phase grant from the Canada Council for the Arts Digital Strategy Fund. The grant was to digitize the Opera Civic Impact Framework, turning it into a tool for collective impact reporting. Built on the Sametrica platform, two phases of the project were carried out in this fiscal year, and continues in into 2021/22. To date, we have achieved our 100% capacity of onboarding members to the Opera Impact Platform.

"BUILDING AN ARTS IMPACT COMMUNITY" CONFERENCE



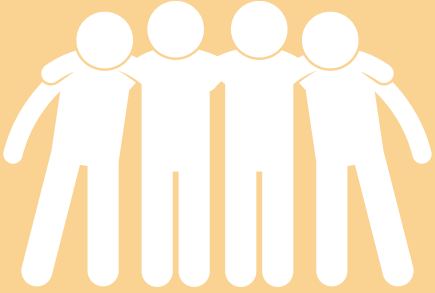
On June 23, 2021, Mass Culture and the Association for Opera in Canada hosted an event Building an Arts Impact Community. Speakers included Senator Patricia Bovey, looking at art and its impact on society, followed by presentations by AOC's Executive Director Christina Loewen sharing our five-year journey to the creation of an Opera Civic Impact Framework and Platform with an invitation for a grassroots exploration of what a broader Arts Impact Community and Approach might look like, and Dr. Gladys Rowe who set the stage for decolonized community-building.

OPERA MEMBERSHIP EXTENSION POLICY

Thanks to emergency funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, we were able to provide dues relief to any and all members who needed it in 2020/2021. The OMEP program was available to any member, new or renewing, for one full year (October 2020-Oct 2021)

OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

RBC FELLOWSHIP/MENTORSHIP



16 FELLOWS

16 MENTORS

23 WORKSHOPS & EVENTS



10 STRATEGIC CONSULTATIONS



31 ARTISTS HELPED
THROUGH
ARTIST RELIEF FUND



430
MEMBERS

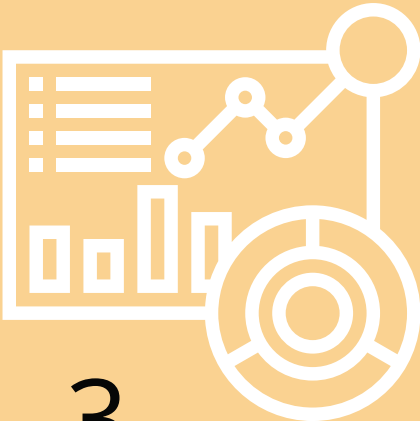
SOCIAL MEDIA



44,678 FACEBOOK
REACH

5,355 INSTAGRAM
REACH

OPERA IMPACT PLATFORM



3 FRAMEWORKS

100 INDICATORS BEING MEASURED

100% ONBOARDING CAPACITY



OVER
100,000
IN DUES RELIEF PROVIDED

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MICHAEL HIDETOSHI MORI - CHAIR
GENERAL DIRECTOR
TAPESTRY OPERA

IAN RYE - VICE-CHAIR
CEO
PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA

TIM YAKIMEC - SECRETARY-TREASURER
GENERAL DIRECTOR
EDMONTON OPERA

CHERYL HICKMAN - PAST CHAIR
GENERAL DIRECTOR
OPERA ON THE AVALON

DEAN BURRY
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND COMPOSER
QUEENS UNIVERSITY

PROF. PATRICK J. HANSEN
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR OF OPERA STUDIES
MCGILL UNIVERSITY

BRUCE MUNRO WRIGHT
DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

AMY MUSHINSKI
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC AFFAIRS
CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

CHANTAL LAMBERT
DIRECTRICE
L'ATELIER LYRIQUE DE L'OPÉRA DE MONTRÉAL
MONTREAL, QC

MARION NEWMAN
MEZZO-SOPRANO

JENNIFER SZETO, CO-FOUNDER MUSIQUE 3 FEMMES
MONTREAL, QC

MARC SCORCA - EX- OFFICIO
PRESIDENT AND CEO, OPERA AMERICA

STAFF & SUPPORT SERVICES

CHRISTINA LOEWEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JOEL KLEIN
GENERAL MANAGER

JACLYN GROSSMAN
PROGRAMS ASSOCIATE

RYAN MCDONALD
SOCIAL MEDIA ASSOCIATE

AMANDA WHITNEY
ACCOUNTING AND BOOK-KEEPING SERVICES

MEREDITH DAVIS
GOOD ROOTS CONSULTING
CIVIC IMPACT FRAMEWORK CONSULTANT

SAMETRICA
OPERA IMPACT PLATFORM TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

SUE EDWORTHY
20TH ANNIVERSARY COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

LEADING WITH NICE
OPERA IMPACT PLATFORM COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

PORTFOLIO ARTIST COLLECTIVE SUMMER 2020:

ANDREW ADRIDGE, OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE, VANESSA CROOME, SOCIAL MEDIA ASSOCIATE, REBECCA CUDDY, INDIGENOUS ADVISOR, JACLYN GROSSMAN, PROGRAMS ASSOCIATE, MAIA JOURNEAU, DIGITAL AND ADVOCACY ASSOCIATE, ALEX KOUTELIAS, MEMBERSHIP & FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATE, RYAN MCDONALD, STRATEGIC PROJECTS ASSOCIATE.

OUR SUPPORTERS

PUBLIC FUNDERS



FOUNDATIONS



INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Up to 499 \$

Catherine D'Angelo
Adam Da Ros
Domoney Artists Management
Hans and Susanne Forbrich
Kim Gaynor
Michael Gray
Ian Henderson
Cheryl Hickman
Highlands Opera Studio
Nina Horvath
Rodney M. Kerr
Lorna MacDonald
Michael Mori
Marion Newman
Wendy Nielsen
Rosemary Thomson
Robert Vineberg
Kat Williams

500 \$ and over

Dean Burry
Richard Cook
Larry Desrochers
Chantal Lambert
Christina Loewen
Robert Milne
Bruce Munro Wright
Ian Rye
Ann Summers Dossena
James Wright
Tom Wright
Tim Yakimec

Artist Emergency Relief Fund

Catherine D'Angelo
Adam Da Ros
Hans and Susanne Forbrich
Ian Henderson
Nina Horvath
Rodney M. Kerr
Chantal Lambert
Christina Loewen
Michael Mori
Wendy Nielsen
Kat Williams
James Wright
Tom Wright