

Association for Opera in Canada

Annual Report

2021-2022



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



2021/22 marked the first full year of our new strategic plan and we made headway on a number of our goals, offering equity training to senior opera leaders and opera company board members, developing the Resilience Frameworks, delivering the RBC Fellowship/Mentorship Program in its second year, launching "Centering Artists" a suite of programs to support opera artists, and hosting numerous sector zoom calls to keep everyone connected at times when we could not be together.

For our member companies and individuals, it was a year of ups and downs. The optimism we all felt in fall 2021 as most companies re-opened, quickly dissolved in early 2022 as the wave of the Omicron variant spread across the globe and many productions were postponed once again. At AOC, we were ready and standing by and in the first few weeks of 2022 we provided as many artists relief grants as we did in the entire first two years of the pandemic.

Those early days of the new year were also marred by significant global and domestic unrest - the Russia/Ukraine invasion and closer to home, the Truckers protest and occupation in our nation's capital, all headlines of the first few months of 2022.

Spring brought welcome relief, with many re-openings and in-person gatherings. I was thrilled to physically attend Canadian Heritage's The Minister's Summit in Ottawa, and the OPERA America Conference in Minneapolis, their first in-person conference since the start of the pandemic. It was a joyous reunion as well as a clear generational shift, with so many new faces, and new leadership in place. At the end of May, I joined General Manager Joel Klein and board member Jennifer Szeto at the Watershed Festival in Kingston, a project of Queen's faculty and AOC board member Dean Burry.

We continued to offer dues relief in 21/22 to Opera Artists namely through the program called ROAM (Relief for Opera Artist Membership).

In this annual report, you will read all about the many new projects and initiatives launched in the past year by our hard-working and passionate staff, all stewarded under the steady governance of our amazing board of directors. To them I extend my gratitude for their investment of time and their generosity of spirit and guidance.

Christina Loewen
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



2021/22 was filled with an impressive and astonishing array of activities that the Association has been taking on in challenging times.

I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the entire staff at the Association for working incredibly hard and with a lot of passion to make change possible, to bring positive change in our sector, and to bring all of us together.

This is my ninth year on the board. The immense sense of heart in this organisation is what has kept me deeply involved, and it remains my hope that the Association can continue to help as much as possible in bringing the Canadian opera sector together.

I'm very proud that, particularly in the last few years, we've been able to expand our membership not only by increasing our number of Professional Company Members, but dramatically increasing our engagement with artists.

The organisation is more relevant now than it has ever been. As we move out of the challenges and hard times of the COVID years, I look forward to a new year of optimism for the future, with a strong Association aiding us in visioning the sector we hope to build.

Michael Hidetoshi Mori
Executive Director

FINANCIAL REPORT

Overview

Thank you to the audit committee for reviewing the statements, Secretary-Treasurer Bruce Munro Wright, Debra King, Edmonton Opera, Chris Hutchinson, COC, and Heather Kitchen, Calgary Opera.

For the year ending June 30, 2022, the Association reports a small operating surplus of \$3,930. Taking into consideration the change in market value of the investments, the association posts an overall deficit of - \$40,633. By last year's Board motion, the deficit is being offset/funded by an internal transfer from the Board Designated Operating Reserve, which last year received a surplus transfer of \$135,000 to provide stability in a prolonged recovery period of projected deficits.

Management of our investment portfolio was provided by Harbourfront Wealth Management. Our overall restricted and unrestricted net assets at year end is \$590,006.

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



SALUTE TO BOARD MEMBERS



We salute and bid adieu to three board members stepping down this year Alexandra Skoczylas, former Executive Director of Opera Atelier, mezzo-soprano, Marion Newman, and Heather Kitchen, General Director and CEO Calgary Opera. Marion Newman joined the board in 2018 and provided the essential voice of the artist to our governance work. Alexandra and Heather joined the board recently in 2021 and contributed fulsomely to our board meetings and strategic priorities. The board expresses their deep appreciation and gratitude to them both for their time, energy and dedication to the opera sector.



At the 2022 Annual Meeting of Members, we welcome new board member Robin Whiffen, General Director, Against the Grain Theatre

STAFF & SUPPORT SERVICES

CHRISTINA LOEWEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JOEL KLEIN
GENERAL MANAGER

JACLYN GROSSMAN
PROGRAMS ASSOCIATE

RYAN MCDONALD
SOCIAL MEDIA ASSOCIATE

KYLE BRISCOE, ALUMNI ASSOCIATE

HILARY BURGI, AMANDA WHITNEY. YOUNG ASSOCIATES
ACCOUNTING AND BOOK-KEEPING SERVICES

MEREDITH DAVIS
GOOD ROOTS CONSULTING
CIVIC IMPACT FRAMEWORK CONSULTANT

TERM EMPLOYEES:

EVA STONE BARNEY
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE
(SUMMER EXPERIENCE PROGRAM, GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO, 2021)

CAMILA MONTEFUSCO
EVENTS ASSOCIATE
(STUDENT WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAM OF CHRC FUNDED BY GOVERNMENT OF CANADA)

EKATERINA BOGOMOL
COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE
(STUDENT WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAM OF CHRC FUNDED BY GOVERNMENT OF CANADA)

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2021/22, we delivered a number of programs and services aligned with the goals of our strategic plan Resilience Through Equity:

Goal 1 – Equity as Goal, Equity as Lens

- Offered a 3-part webinar in Equity and Inclusive Practices for 36 Senior Opera Leaders run by Nicole McVan and Tanya Hannah Rumble.
- Delivered a cohort- based training program for 75 opera company board members with Alden Habacon. The program consisted of 4 modules, and we delivered it in three cohorts in October 2021, November 2021 and Jan/Feb 2022.

Goal 2 – Supporting Diversity in the Art Form

- Designed and delivered the New Works Pitch Program funded by the Azrieli Foundation during Watershed Festival in Kingston, ON in May 2022.
- Introduced an online New Works Showcase featuring 30 works in development by equity-seeking creators

Goal 3 and Goal 4 - Thriving Decent Work and Capitalizing the Plan

- Secured \$400,000 from Canadian Heritage's Canadian Performing Arts Workers Resilience Program to run the OAR program in 2022/23.

RBC

FELLOWSHIP/MENTORSHIP PROGRAM



The RBC Fellowship/Mentorship Program was delivered for the second time in 2021/22. It consisted of a 7-month Fellowship for 10 early-career Fellows as well as a 4-month Mentorship Program engaging 10 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. Led by Jaclyn Grossman, the program demonstrated the importance of connecting artists and fostering portfolio careers, leading to many new initiatives, important connections, skill development, and work opportunities. This year's fellowship culminated in a Digital Showcase. In support of artists beyond the early career stage, we delivered 7 monthly LINK Webinars on a variety of topics to enhance an artists' portfolio skill sets.

2021-22 Fellows: Brittany Ray, Camryn Dewar, Gwendolyn Yearwood, Jayne Hammond, Julia McVicar, Lauren Halasz, Luka Kawabata, Nicole Ross, Taryn Plater, Yanik Gosselin

Mentors: Anna Theodosakis, Jorell Williams, Asitha Tennekoon, Rebecca Cuddy, Robin Whiffen, Julie McIsaac, Maureen Batt, Danika Lorèn, Racheal McCaig, Renee Salewski

2021-22 Coaches: Eva Cappuletti Chao, Karen Choi, Jeremy Long



OPERA IMPACT PLATFORM PROJECT

As a result of a multi-phase grant from the Canada Council for the Arts Digital Strategy Fund, in Phase 3 we sought to expand and share the tools and resources developed by the opera sector to the broader art sector. In partnership with Mass Culture, we collaborated on a Datathon in February 2022 which resulted in the collection of over 40 resources for measuring arts impact including data sets, programs, frameworks, technologies, papers and tools. We explored legal frameworks for protecting the IP of AOC's work, while making it available to our arts and non-profit partners through a Creative Commons license. Phase 3 plans include a 4-part series in Evaluation Fundamentals for the Arts, to be developed and delivered by Good Roots Consulting in October 2022, as well as the release of a new web resource, Powered by Art Impact.



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CENTERING ARTISTS

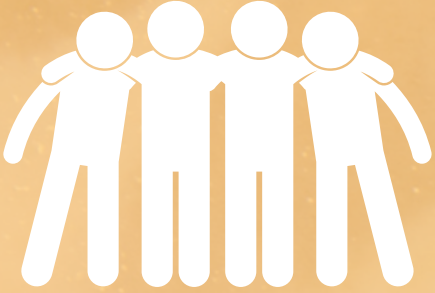
A three-year initiative, supported in part by the Azrieli Foundation, "Centering Artists" focussed on the needs of opera artists at all stages of their career. Highlights of the 2022 program included:

- Relief for Opera Artist Membership Policy (ROAM) providing dues relief to all opera artist members
- \$15,700 in direct support to opera artists in need through the Opera Artist Relief Fund
- New Works Pitch Program, providing key exposure to equity-seeking creative teams developing new works with the opportunity to pitch at a sector event (At Watershed Festival in May 2022) as well as be featured in our latest resource, [The New Works Directory](#), Canada



OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

RBC FELLOWSHIP/MENTORSHIP



10 FELLOWS

10 MENTORS

23 WORKSHOPS & EVENTS



ARTISTS HELPED
THROUGH
ARTIST RELIEF FUND

OPERA IMPACT PLATFORM



3 FRAMEWORKS

674 RESPONSES



378
MEMBERS

SOCIAL MEDIA



42,935 FACEBOOK
REACH

9,526 INSTAGRAM
REACH



OVER
\$21,000
IN DUES RELIEF PROVIDED

IMPACT STATEMENTS

I KNOW THAT I AM NOT ALONE IN FEELING REASSURED THAT THE AOC IS WORKING HARD TO PROVIDE INCLUSIVE INTELLECTUAL AND, WHEN NECESSARY, FINANCIAL RESOURCES WITHIN OUR SECTOR.

THIS HAS BEEN AN ABSOLUTELY DEVASTATING TIME FOR SO MANY OF US, AND IT IS SO COMFORTING TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE ORGANIZATIONS OUT THERE WHO ARE STEPPING UP IN A BIG WAY FOR ARTISTS!

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE THE RBC ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, IT WOULD BE TRANSFORMATIONAL. THIS PROGRAM HAS MADE ME GROW IN EVERY WAY: ARTISTICALLY, PERSONALLY, AND PROFESSIONALLY.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MICHAEL HIDETOSHI MORI - CHAIR
GENERAL DIRECTOR
TAPESTRY OPERA

IAN RYE - VICE-CHAIR
CEO
PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA

BRUCE MUNRO WRIGHT - SECRETARY-TREASURER
DIRECTOR- AT- LARGE

DEAN BURRY
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND COMPOSER
QUEENS UNIVERSITY

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

HEATHER KITCHEN
GENERAL DIRECTOR AND CEO
CALGARY OPERA

AMY MUSHINSKI
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC AFFAIRS
CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

CHANTAL LAMBERT
DIRECTRICE
L'ATELIER LYRIQUE DE L'OPÉRA DE MONTRÉAL

MARION NEWMAN
MEZZO-SOPRANO

ALEXANDRA SKOCZYLAS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OPERA ATELIER

JENNIFER SZETO
CO-FOUNDER MUSIQUE 3 FEMMES

ARIA UMEZAWA
CO-FOUNDER, AMPLIFIED OPERA

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

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CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO



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