

2022|23 Season Report



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A Message from Pacific Opera Victoria

The 2022|23 Opera Season explored the greatest of all human conditions – love. Audiences were treated to three engaging love stories: Bizet's *Carmen*, Braunfels' *The Birds* and *Così fan tutte* by Mozart.

These beautifully staged productions saw soloists from across Canada join the Pacific Opera Chorus and the Victoria Symphony to bring classical music to new heights under Maestro Timothy's Vernon's baton. The 2022|23 Season also saw us celebrate the 43 year legacy of Pacific Opera Victoria under Timothy's artistic leadership, culminating in a specially curated concert program *43 Years of Opera*, which featured over one hundred artists and showcased some of the company's over 120 productions. We were pleased to see so many of you there on that night, excitedly celebrating this milestone with us.

Live at the Baumann included two new Canadian works: *The Book of My Shames* and *Take This Waltz*, while *Opera Etc.* programs celebrated operatic voice at over 300 performances on sidewalks, in parks, at seniors centers and schools throughout the region. The next generation of opera artists were stewarded through unique opportunities including the Women in Musical Leadership program, the Citizen Artist Program, the Arts Leadership Program, and through collaborations with the University of Victoria Schools of Music and Theatre. Countless youth raised their voices through our Opera Creation Camps, Living Opera programs in schools, and the performance of the Victoria Children's Choir in *Carmen*.

This exciting programming is due in large part to the generosity of you, our loyal opera family of donors, sponsors, patrons, subscribers, volunteers, board members, staff, artists, partners and funders. We profoundly thank you for all that you do to support us and help us keep opera at the heart of all the communities we serve.



IAN RYE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



TIMOTHY VERNON

FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



MARGOT MCLAREN MOORE

BOARD PRESIDENT

Celebrating 43 years of Pacific Opera Victoria

Artists of all genres, some with a long-standing relationship with Pacific Opera joined us at the McPherson Playhouse as we celebrated 43 outstanding years of artistic accomplishment under the leadership of founding Artistic Director Maestro Timothy Vernon.

The Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia opened the evening, hosted by mezzo-soprano Marion Newman, the acclaimed host of CBC Radio's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera. The evening showcased the work of many talented artists, singers, and instrumentalists associated with Pacific Opera. Kimberly-Ann Bartczak, Giuseppe Pietraroia, and Timothy Vernon himself conducted three sets with the Victoria Symphony and the Pacific Opera Chorus in a rousing and meaningful program. Guest soloists included sopranos Suzanne Rigden and Lauren Marigson, mezzo-soprano Allyson McHardy, tenor Colin Ainsworth, and baritone Bruce Kelly. Tracy Dahl, Richard Margison, and Robert Holliston also made special appearances.

The evening's festivities were not confined to the stage: the lobbies were animated with archival displays of costumes, props, ephemera and maquettes; guests were invited to take selfies in the Opera Shop Photo Booth with some of their favourite props and costume pieces from productions spanning 43 years; guests also shared their stories in the interactive celebration event guest book.







Carmen

Our long awaited production of this extremely popular opera was a fitting season opener, and the sold-out production showed us just how much our audiences were yearning to experience the communal feeling of live musical performance.

This production of Bizet's unforgettable opera was set against a backdrop of the Spanish Civil War of the 1930's. Audiences were treated to outstanding performances by an extremely strong cast, who were themselves supported by the Victoria Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Timothy Vernon. The innovative set also captivated audiences as its individual parts – expertly and smoothly moved into place by stage crew, which was a performance in itself - allowed it to depict a variety of locations including a taverna, the bullfight arena and a woodland hideout

Soloists included mezzo - soprano Carolyn Sproule in the title role making her Pacific Opera debut. This production also offered wonderful chorus opportunities to the Victoria Children's Choir who performed alongside the Pacific Opera Chorus.





"The score is constantly ablaze with melodies, you can surely sing a half dozen of them without thinking!"

- Timothy Vernon

"We have seen many Pacific Opera productions over the years but Carmen tonight was your best ever. How did you get so many people on that little stage? The sets felt lavish. The lighting and costumes were excellent. Lauren Margison sang beautifully and how John Pickle jumped in and fit right in is a mystery! But best of all was Carolyn Sproules Carmen. Most play Carmen brashly, Ms Sproule was seductive and sexy and so excellent from start to finish. She was the best Carmen I have ever seen. Kudos Pacific Opera, this production was a marvel!!"

"Bravi... a wonderfully directed and performed Carmen perfectly fitting set in Civil War Spain"

"A FABULOUS OPENING FOR THE SEASON!! BRAVI TUTTI!!"

"SO WELL DESERVED! IT WAS A MAGNIFICENT OPENING NIGHT! "



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The Birds

We delighted opera goers with the Canadian première of Walter Braunfels' *The Birds*. Based on the Aristophanes play of the same name, we were proud to bring this opera to the Royal Theatre stage. Unlike other Pacific Opera productions where most performers and creative team members have a passing familiarity with the work, *The Birds* was the first opera in a long time, where the piece was unknown to the majority of those involved in its production. While it may have been an artistic risk to stage a relatively unknown work, we were so very thrilled at the audiences' enthusiastic response to this magical musical fantasy.

The spectacular singing in this rediscovered opera conveys the charm and sweetness of Braunfels' work. The audience is immersed in a story that is touching, beautiful and funny in parts. Brought to life by a gifted creative team led by stage director Glynis Leyshon, *The Birds* is set in the German trenches of WW1 and in a dream world far removed from the brutality of war. This love story between human Hoffegut (Good Hope) played by tenor Adrian Kramer and Nachtigal (Nightingale), portrayed by coloratura soprano Claire de Sévigné making their Pacific Opera debuts, includes visually stunning props and vignettes involving over-sized poppies and projections of a wrathful Zeus. There was even a bird wedding!





"Almost one hundred years old, Braunfels' operatic masterpiece has begun to come into its own only in the past two or three decades. Aristophanes was his inspiration; Braunfels departs from the Attic master in the second half of the piece; rather than a driving plot. Braunfels writes a continuous flow of irresistible melodic and sonic beauty. No denying the huge shadows of Wagner and Strauss, but it has its own personal idiom - the vocal writing is grateful in the best way, and the orchestra delivers a web of gorgeous, evocative themes and harmonies that transport us into this magical phantasmagoria." - Timothy Vernon

"We went last night and loved it. A wonderful production. Incredible voices, well staged and a bit of humour."

"Bravo on a superb production! We saw it today and loved everything about it - a great example of everyone working in sync to a common goal, both production and performance."

"It was phenomenal. I saw it twice. And I'd see it again!! Well done POV."

"It's all SO beautifully designed! I'm so amazed every show by the costume and prop designers!"



Production Patron
The Estate of
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Così fan tutte



Staged by Pacific Opera for the first time since 2010, Pacific Opera presented audiences with an exciting version of *Così fan tutte*, an international co-production with Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Théâtre de Caen, and Tokyo Nikikai Opera. While Mozart's quirky comedy is based on a classic theme of "fiancée swapping" dating back many centuries, the follies and foibles remain just as relevant as ever.

Set in the mid-twentieth century at the famous recording studio, Funkhaus in Berlin, this production was devised by a powerhouse creative team comprising French stage director and costume designer, Laurent Pelly, set designer Chantal Thomas and German associate director, Christian Räh.

In this production, which includes the greatest arias ever written by Mozart, wonderful performances were delivered by a gifted cast, which included Chinese mezzo-soprano Hongni Wu making her Canadian debut as Dorabella, and Pacific Opera favorite, Italian-Canadian Lucia Cesaroni as Fiordiligi.





"Miraculous music didn't prevent the 19th century from finding Così trivial and contrived. In the 20th, gradually the sense that this may be the most profound of Mozart's Italian comedies gained the upper hand. There are certainly many deeply insightful moments throughout, including the pain of personal betrayal; the character development of soprano and tenor is as humanly real as anything in Mozart, and the conundrum of the finale, unresolved in either text or music, makes a clichéd lieto fine (happy ending) unthinkable. Strauss loved Così more than anything in the world of music. Not hard to understand why." - Timothy Vernon

"Right up there with Milan, New York or Covent Garden! Don't miss this wonderful production, it's perfect in every respect."

"Wish we as the chorus could take in all that these fabulous leads do on stage! We hear the audience laughing from our dressing rooms and know they are having a blast! The audience gives a standing ovation every night!"



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In Memory of Doreen Moser

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Take this Waltz

This innovatively staged piece was created to celebrate the legendary Canadian singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen. This delightful production, which includes music, dance and stunning visuals was staged by choreographer and director Idan Cohen, and included sublime performances by world-renowned Canadian bass-baritone Daniel Okulitch, the multi-talented dancer/musician Ted Littlemore, and a classical chamber ensemble of violin, accordion and cello.

"It was a smashing success. Congrats POV and bravi tutti!"

"Such an enjoyable performance - music and dance, both."

"One of the highlights of the year for me. Really outstanding."





The Book of My Shames

Written and performed by Victoria tenor Isaiah Bell and co-created with director Sean Guist, *The Book of My Shames* was developed with the support of Opera Kelowna, Pacific Opera Victoria and Intrepid Theatre and premiered at Tapestry Opera in 2019 as a solo showcase. Persistent emptiness of heart drives a young man out from the shadow of a restrictive fundamentalist cult, into obsessive passions for bad men, and onward to a successful but strangely hollow life on the stage.

Dubbed “part confessional comedy, part opera séance, part love letter to lost innocence” this moving, hybrid opera/cabaret/theatre performance was a co-production between Pacific Opera Victoria and Intrepid Theatre. Originally written for piano and voice, the latest iteration of this insightful and tender story, was arranged with a chamber quartet for accompaniment and was part of Intrepid Theatre’s Incoming Festival.



Opera Etc.

COLORATURA – INTERACTIVE

Building on our original Coloratura program, which was created to share opera with the community, showcase wonderful Canadian talents, and entertain and delight residents in care facilities and residential homes, Coloratura – Interactive are intimate performances of classical and music theatre pieces sung by opera artists and include artist-led group sing-alongs of popular music theatre repertoire.

INSIDE OPERA

Insightful, friendly, and spirited conversations about opera recommended for newcomers and opera aficionados alike. Robert Holliston Pacific Opera's Curator of Public Engagement and special guests chatted about the inspiration of 19th century *Carmen* to popular culture, the creation and storyline of *The Birds*, and Mozart's timeless comedy *Così fan tutte*.

VOICES IN NATURE

This delightful program saw communities in Greater Victoria once again experience multi-disciplinary walks through local parks featuring singers, poets, Indigenous artists and more. This feast for the ears and mind delighted the senses and deepened one's connection to land, through the experience of art in nature.

POP UP OPERA

Performances feature outdoor performances by emerging artists in surprising places throughout the community. Over 390 performances have been delivered to date throughout the Greater Victoria region, surprising people with music in unexpected locations.



INSIDE OPERA – THE BIRDS



Pop up Opera and Voices in Nature Supporter

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PRE-SHOW LOBBY LECTURE

The perfect appetizer for every mainstage performance featured Robert Holliston chatting about the opera, its composer and its time.

PODCAST

The podcast series *What's Up with Opera?* saw Rebecca Hass, Pacific Opera's Director of Engagement Programs and Partnerships discussing the changing face of opera in the 21st Century, with leaders and trailbreakers in the international field of opera, including Barbara Hannigan, Peter Sellars, J'nai Bridges and our very own David Devan!

TICKET ACCESS PROGRAM

Originally launched in 2022 in collaboration with 46 community partner organizations, the Ticket Access Program was designed to make opera more accessible to those Victoria residents experiencing barriers to attending live performances. This program provided more than 1,000 free tickets to the season's productions.

MUSIC ALIVE

Pacific Opera's Civic Engagement resident artists created intimate video recitals from their homes and studios for music lovers to enjoy at home.

VOICES IN CIRCLE: IDENTIFYING INDIGENOUS CULTURAL VOICES

Pacific Opera partnered with the University of Victoria's Voices in Circle initiative, which featured performances from established and emerging Indigenous artists. This series, which was guided and curated by a Programming Circle of Indigenous and Métis artists, arts administrators, academics and leaders was launched by tenor Jeremy Dutcher.



Youth and Education

COMMUNITY PREVIEWS

School groups and families attended the final dress rehearsal of the season's productions. This was a wonderful opportunity for families to attend with children and introduce opera and the arts to the young people in their lives.

LIVING OPERA

Delivered by Pacific Opera Teaching Artists to elementary schools in Greater Victoria, these hands-on workshops for students in grades 3 to 8 are designed to empower students to explore opera story-telling and are created in alignment with the Big Ideas, Learning Standards, Curricular Competencies and Content of the BC Arts Curriculum.


OPERA CREATION CAMP

Offered in collaboration with Kaleidoscope Theatre for Young People, youth aged 9 to 13 created and performed their own short opera. Guided by a teaching artist, a composer, and a visual artist, they wrote the words and music, created the set and props, rehearsed, and then presented a performance for friends and family. Week-long Opera Creation Camps are offered in the summer and spring breaks.



Youth and Education Programming is
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I enjoy opera because
of the singing and the music

POV! 

To: POV!

THANK you

POV!

enjoy 
because
the
are unique
magicle

Thank you


P.O.V!

Thanks
POV!

Thank you POV


Thanks for coming in!
I enjoy opera because I like
enjoying a performance with
friends.


Thanks
for coming!



from Max


Thanks!



I Love how
Expressive
opera
is! 

You guys
are
Cool

So



Online Impact

2022|23 SEASON BY THE NUMBERS



38

Countries reached by
digital programming



67,289

Visits to our website
12% growth from 21|22

17

Online videos, podcasts, broadcasts

6 Podcast Episodes

3 Pre-concert talks

2 Inside Opera

6 Music Alive Videos



2,395

eNews subscribers



4,821

Facebook followers



3,024

Twitter followers



2,496

Instagram followers
32% growth from 21|22

17,158

Online views of digital programming

Regional Impact

2022|23 SEASON BY THE NUMBERS

1

Celebration concert
and exhibit

240

Artists performing, creating,
& teaching, onstage, behind
the scenes, and online

8

Live at the Baumann
Performances

12

Staged Opera Performances



668

Youth participating in opera



17,974

Adults at LIVE opera



64

Community Partnerships

402

Community / education events

96 Voices in Nature events

91 Artist development and
coaching sessions

2 Youth Opera Camps

24 Living Opera Youth Workshops

114 Pop Up Opera performances

20 Opera Postcard performances

24 Coloratura-Interactive concerts

12 Community recitals

19 Public lectures and dialogues

YEARLY REVENUE

Private Sector
49%

Earned Revenues
15%

Government Grants
36%

YEARLY EXPENSES

Artistic Operations
& Productions
59%

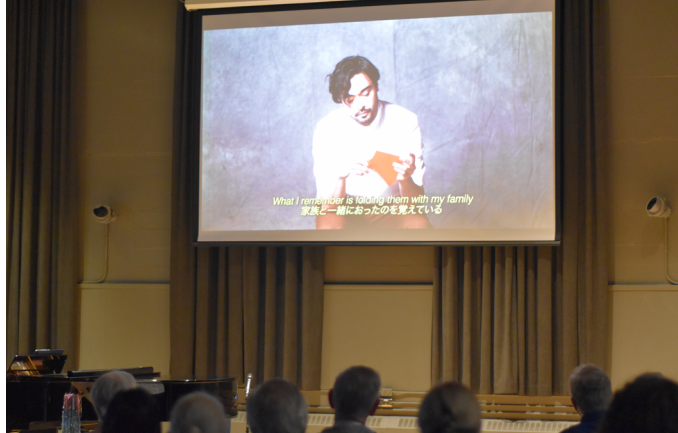
Marketing & Fundraising
7%

Administration
& Opera Centre
13%

Salaries & Benefits
21%

9,536

Participants in
community and
education events



Artist Development

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAM

This program involved four citizen artists engaged in a virtual and in-person Civic Engagement training program where they created music documentaries for *Opera Etc.* programming. The mentorship program supports artists at various stages in their journey to engage in community. The Civic Engagement Artist Residency Program of 2022|23 culminated in 4 Music Alive video recitals, *Voices in Nature* performances, and *Dreaming* - a staged concert.

“Yo-Yo Ma defines citizen artists as those who “transcend technique in order to seek out the truth in our world in a way that gives meaning and sustenance to individuals and communities.”

IBPOC ARTS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Launched in 2021 in collaboration with arts and cultural organizations and learning institutions in British Columbia and beyond, this project has been devised to meet the ongoing challenge of developing an arts and culture sector that reflects the diverse community in which it serves. To date 23 Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour arts administrators and practitioners aspiring to advance their careers into arts leadership roles have participated in this immersive arts management and leadership program.



SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The University of Victoria's M.Mus curriculum includes an Ensemble Performance credit course (Mus 580H) through which UVic voice students perform with the Pacific Opera Victoria Chorus. This year, coaching and role study was offered in-person and online by principal coach Kimberley-Ann Bartczak, Joey Pietraroia Pacific Opera's Associate Conductor and Chorus Master, and Rebecca Hass.

WOMEN IN MUSICAL LEADERSHIP NATIONAL CONDUCTING RESIDENCY

In collaboration with several Canadian opera companies and symphony orchestras, Pacific Opera launched a season of residencies for two female conductors. Designed to nurture the next generation of women conductors, the fellowship will deliver three years of practical conducting experience and training, while developing a professional network that spans Canada.

Women in Musical Leadership is led by Tapestry Opera, in partnership with Lead Partner Pacific Opera Victoria and Lead Orchestral Partner Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The three Lead Partners work in collaboration with 23 opera, music, and performing arts organizations across Canada. This pilot program was the first announced in October 2020 and launched in 2021, with the support of the Azrieli Foundation

Emerging Artist Program Sponsor



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Thank you!

Thank you so much to you, our Opera Family. It takes a huge community to support opera creation and performance. You help us through your ticket purchases, your donations, and your time and talents and we truly couldn't create without you. We are able to thank a portion of our supporters here, but please know that all contributions, financial and otherwise are valued.

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IMAGES

Cover Page | The Cast of *Carmen*. Photo: David Cooper

A Message From CEO, Artistic Director, and Board President | The bird wedding, *The Birds*, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence

Celebrating 43 Years of Pacific Opera Victoria | Timothy Vernon with orchestra and Peter Barrett as Ratefund in *The Birds*, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence

Page 5 | Timothy Vernon, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence

Carmen | Top left: Carolyn Sproule as Carmen and chorus, photo: David Cooper. Lower from left: Chorus of *Carmen*, and Lauren Margison as Micaëla with Adam Luther as Don José, photos: Mackenzie Lawrence. Top right: Carolyn Sproule as Carmen and Adam Luther as Don José, Lower from left: Images of the chorus, photos: Mackenzie Lawrence. Rose and rose petals by Trapeze Communications Inc.

The Birds | Top left: Cast and Chorus of *The Birds*. Lower from left: Peter Barrett as Ratefund and Adrian Kramer as Hoffegut, and two supers as soldiers, photos by Mackenzie Lawrence. Top right: The chorus of *The Birds*, Lower from left: The chorus, and Claire de Sévigné as Nachtigall (Nightingale), photos by Mackenzie Lawrence. Feathers by Trapeze Communications Inc.

Così fan tutte | Top left: Christopher Dunham as Guglielmo, Lucia Cesaroni as Fiordiligi, and Hongni Wu as Dorabella, Lucia Cesaroni as Fiordiligi, photo by Mackenzie Lawrence. Lower from left: Hongni Wu as Dorabella and Lucia Cesaroni as Fiordiligi, photo by Tim Matheson. Christopher Dunham as Guglielmo and Owen McCausland as Ferrando, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence. Top right: Christopher Dunham as Guglielmo, Hongni Wu as Dorabella, Owen McCausland as Ferrando, Lucia Cesaroni as Fiordiligi. Christopher Dunham as Guglielmo. Lower from left: Christopher Dunham as Guglielmo, and Hongni Wu as Dorabella, Christopher Dunham as Guglielmo, photos: Mackenzie Lawrence. Watch, mustache and glasses by Trapeze Communications Inc.

Take This Waltz | Top: Ted Littlemore. Lower from left: Ted Littlemore and Daniel Okulitch, Daniel Okulitch, photos: Chris Randle

The Book of My Shames | Top: Isaiah Bell, photo: Dahlia Katz. Lower from left: Sean Guist and Isaiah Bell, photos: Mackenzie Lawrence. Isaiah Bell, photo: Dahlia Katz.

Opera Etc. | Lower left: Robert Holliston and Timothy Vernon during *Inside Opera* | *The Birds*, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence. Chelsea Kutyn during *Pop Up Opera*, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence. Allison Ward and Alex Chen during *Pop Up Opera*, photo: Andrea Pass. Lower right: *Voices in Nature*, photos: Mackenzie Lawrence.

Youth and Education | Lower left: *Creativity Out Loud* summer camp, photos: Mackenzie Lawrence. Right: Collage of thank-you cards from *Living Opera*, photo: Arcade Pallot.

Artist Development | Top left: Ian Rye viewing the installation for BLOND ZOSIA, Luka Kawabata in the debut of The HAFU Project: Chapter 3: WISH, Luka Kawabata; Luka Kawabata, Jaclyn Grossman, Natalya Gennadi, Pierre Heault during *Music Alive Watch Party*; Jaclyn Grossman during her recital for BLOND ZOSIA; Luka Kawabata during *Dreaming: Are you sleeping or awake?*; photos: Arcade Pallot. Naomi Woo photo: Anonymous. Maria Fuller photo: Kevin Light. Gold foil cranes in The HAFU Project: Chapter 3: WISH; artists performing in *Dreaming: Are you sleeping or awake?*; Pierre Heault in *Dreaming: Are you sleeping or awake?* photos: Arcade Pallot

Thank You | Timothy Vernon, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence

Our People | The chorus of *The Birds*, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence

Back Page | Kimberley-Ann Bartzack, with the Victoria Symphony at the *Friends of Timothy Concert*, photo: Mackenzie Lawrence



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Pacific Opera Victoria works and creates on the traditional lands of the Lekwungen speaking people, now known as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.