

A Message From Our Artistic Director

May 12, 2025

Dear friend of the opera,

As we near the end of my first season programming for Pacific Opera Victoria, it feels incredible to think about the experiences we have shared. From the transcendent artistry of Barbara Hannigan and Bertrand Chamayou, to the stunning reflection of humanity in *Rigoletto* and Gilda's final duet, to the sonorous chord of the Victoria Symphony as they began Mozart's penultimate opera— each was unforgettable. And this does not even include all the incredible community events, Coloratura performances, and school shows! But perhaps the most moving of all was watching our *Little Prince* disappear behind the wall of the sheep's crate, a moment that touched hearts and reminded us of opera's unique ability to illuminate beauty, vulnerability, and hope.

This season was built around the inspirational ideal of questing to become our better selves. Though we couldn't have predicted the full extent of the world's current challenges, we knew our community might need a moment of hope. *The Little Prince* became that for so many: a reminder of the beauty and humanity that opera can illuminate. Each night I felt the palpable energy and connection in the theatre as we welcomed both seasoned opera lovers and first-timers. It was an honour to bring this story to life in my new home—and to witness how it resonated with our entire community.

On a personal note: during our Monday night Community Preview, one performer fell ill. As this was the dress rehearsal for one of our *Little Princes* it was very important that we actually run the show as completely as possible. Thus, we made the decision to reduce the sick performer's duties, and the main scene would be sung, or in this case rapped, by me! It was, undoubtedly, one of the most terrifying moments of my career, and yet I had never felt so much excitement! And so, quite unexpectedly, I made both my directorial debut and my operatic performance debut at Pacific Opera Victoria with *The Little Prince*.



Brenna Corner in rehearsal for *The Little Prince* with Jake Apricity Heatherington as The Little Prince, Emma Parkinson as the Fox, and members of the Pacific Opera artistic crew.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to launch two new programs that will nurture the next generation of opera lovers:

- **Summer Youth Performance Program** – Youth in our community will take the stage in Ben Moore's *The Odyssey*, discovering firsthand the transformative power of music and storytelling.
- **Opera Sprouts** – Three Canadian composer-librettist teams will create and workshop new operas for schools with a team of mentors, which will later tour across BC, bringing opera to children in classrooms and communities across the province. We're already thrilled by the response—over twenty creative teams have applied!

As we look to our upcoming season, we delve into the power and relevance of “**truth**”— exploring what is and isn't real, the perceptions we hold of our world, and the importance and consequences of owning the truth. In October, we will see Britten's extraordinary and spooky *The Turn of the Screw*. This piece combines Britten's complex musical language with Henry James' novella about a governess who becomes convinced that malevolent supernatural forces are corrupting the innocence in her place of work. Puccini's *Tosca* will see artists struggle to hold onto the truth of who they are in a politically complicated and corrupt world. And finally, the French Baroque masterpiece *Orpheus & Eurydice* will inspire us to stay steadfast to the truth of love despite the powers of hell. We hope you will join us as we explore what it means to hold fast to the truths of the heart in a world full of uncertainty.

In times like these, the need for opera—the need for connection, empathy, beauty, and truth—is more essential than ever. It is thanks to our community of patrons, donors, and artists, and your belief in our mission that we are able to bring these stories to life.

Will you consider making a gift today to help us continue this vital work?

With only \$21,000 left to raise to meet our Producer fundraising goal, your gift today brings us closer to that milestone and strengthens our entire opera family.

- A donation of **\$175.00** brings *Living Opera* to one classroom - supporting teaching artists and music education.
- A gift of **\$250.00** enables a youth aged 8-18 to participate in the **summer youth performance program** culminating in a professional production of Ben Moore's 45-minute opera, *The Odyssey*.
- With **\$500.00** you help build **sets and props** like the sheep's crate, plane, and stars in *The Little Prince*.

Together, we create more than performances—we create moments of shared meaning, community, and lasting impact. Thank you for being a vital part of our opera family.



Brenna Corner
Artistic Director