

2016/2017 ANNUAL REPORT

*“The Canadian Opera Company has been
doing attention-grabbing work.”*

The New York Times

2016/2017 SEASON AT A GLANCE



142,572

Total attendance and reach combining the COC's mainstage programming (99,296), Education and Outreach events (31,807), and Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre (11,469).



598

Number of performances, community concerts, and events showcasing the transformative power of operatic theatre.



10 YEARS

Our 16/17 season marked 10 years since the opening of the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, a decade of unprecedented artistic momentum and accomplishment.



22,705 KM

The distance travelled by COC sets and costumes in the past season, as our work reached destinations like Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Chicago.



2 CENTURIES

From Handel's *Ariodante* to Harry Somers' *Louis Riel*, we presented a range of operatic repertoire spanning 232 years of human creativity.



6 CONTINENTS

We had visitors from all 13 provinces and territories in Canada, 36 American states and territories, as well as 36 countries representing six continents.



ACTIVITY HUB

The Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts and the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre host diverse activities featuring performing arts companies, non-profit organizations, and a range of marquee events, making the COC a key facilitator for Toronto's rich cultural and civic life. Our 16/17 partners include:

Against the Grain Theatre
Atelier Lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal
Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity
Calgary Opera
Canadian Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
Edmonton Opera

George Brown College
Jeunes Ambassadeurs Lyrique
Luminato Festival
The National Ballet of Canada
Opera on the Avalon
Pacific Opera Victoria
Shen Yun Performing Arts
Show One Productions

Singing with Parkinson's
Stratford Festival
Tapestry Opera
Teatro Proscenium
University of Guelph
Vancouver Opera
Volcano Theatre

SOURCES OF REVENUE

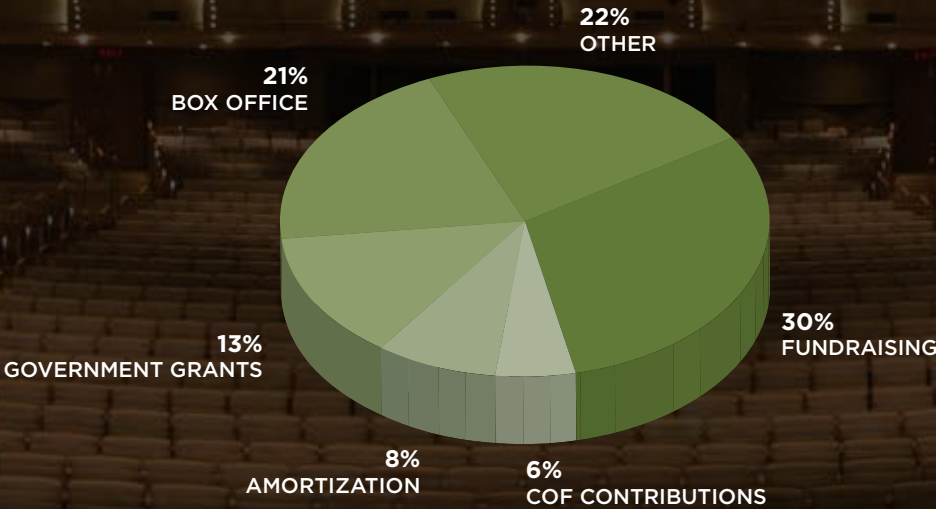


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For complete cast and creative team information, as well as a list of the valued donors, supporters, and committee members who made this season possible, please visit coc.ca/1617AnnualReport.



OPERA IS COMMUNITY

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

When I began my tenure as the Chair of the COC Board of Directors, the word on my mind was “community.” The community of artists who create extraordinary opera at the COC. The community of invested supporters and visionary philanthropists whose generosity drives our excellence. And the community of audiences who give meaning to what we do by sharing in the transformative experience of this art form.

The interconnected strength of those communities is what makes our programming possible and our successes so significant.

In 2016/2017 we presented a diverse repertoire of six mainstage operas, including three new productions—Bellini’s *Norma*, Handel’s *Ariodante*, and Harry Somers’ *Louis Riel*—as well as three COC revivals—Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung*, and Puccini’s *Tosca*. These works were imbued with a contemporary relevance that spoke to us in the here and now, because great operatic theatre, no matter its historical point of origin, has the capacity to transcend time and place to reveal our humanity anew with every performance.

We continue to advance our company’s international profile and reputation by attracting the world’s best artists for significant role debuts and performances, by creating new productions of critically important works, and by collaborating with industry-leading organizations all across the world. Equally crucial is that we remained locally rooted and engaged, and our organizational approach reflects and embraces the communities we serve in everything we do. That is why you’ll read in this report about our participation in bringing opera to after school programs, welcoming newcomers and refugees to COC performances, or hosting the world premiere of new Canadian works at the Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre.

We are part of a larger cultural community, and the COC shares in the responsibility of supporting an ecosystem that continues to thrive with big ideas, collaboration, and training and performance opportunities.

Programming like this isn’t possible without exceptional financial rigour, and in 16/17, for the third year in a row, we demonstrated prudent management by posting a modest surplus. Eradicating financial barriers to the art form, most immediately with regard to ticket price, remains a key priority. In this context, contributed revenue becomes more important than ever, and our fundraising efforts this year were spectacular indeed, with a record \$13.9 million raised (combined operating and endowment). We are all truly grateful to our supporters.

I would like to extend an enormous thanks to my fellow Board members for their dedication and support, as well as Alexander Neef and Johannes Debus for their visionary artistic and musical leadership, which continues to inspire the COC’s community of artists, volunteers, team members, and supporters in championing and fulfilling our mission. As my two-year term as Chair comes to an end, I especially want to acknowledge our Vice-Chair Justin Linden, who will begin his own tenure as Chair of the COC this October, and who I know will bring forward-thinking leadership to the COC. I look forward to continuing to work together with Justin and senior management to nurture and develop the COC community, and to make ours one of the finest opera companies in the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colleen Sexsmith'.

Colleen Sexsmith
Chair, Board of Directors
Canadian Opera Company

VISION

We will bring the transformative experience of opera to our local, national, and global audience every day of the year.

COC365

STATEMENT OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

At the heart of the mission and vision for the company is our unequivocal belief in artistic excellence. Over the last decade, the COC has become a destination of choice for the world's greatest Canadian and international artists. Our goals can only be achieved if the quality of our art remains at the core of our thinking and planning.

Recognizing the accomplishments of General Director Alexander Neef's leadership, the COC is pleased to announce the extension of his contract until the fall of 2026. This creates vital organizational continuity and sets the stage for the next phase of the company's evolution.



FINANCIALS

Canadian Opera Company

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The consolidated financial statements of the Canadian Opera Company (“COC”) include the results for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017 of both COC and Canadian Opera House Corporation (“COHC”). COHC is an affiliated charitable organization controlled by the COC. COHC owns and operates the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, the performance space for both the COC and The National Ballet of Canada. We believe that the presentation of consolidated financial information provides our stakeholders with the most meaningful and holistic view of the total operations and financial position.

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

As at June 30 (in thousands)

Assets	2017	2016
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 196	\$ 189
Accounts receivable	3,561	3,868
Due from Canadian Opera Foundation	362	206
Other	1,056	590
	5,175	4,853
Investments	3,255	4,345
Capital assets, net	132, 595	135,966
Other	1,447	1,765
	<u>\$ 142,472</u>	<u>\$ 146,929</u>

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities		
Bank indebtedness	\$ —	\$ 1,544
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	2,109	1,411
Deferred revenue	7,407	7,986
	9,516	10,941
Deferred capital contributions	104,234	107,277
Internally restricted net assets	243	283
Operating net assets	28,479	28,428
	<u>\$ 142,472</u>	<u>\$ 146,929</u>

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS

For the years ended June 30 (in thousands)

Revenue	2017	2016
Fundraising	\$ 11,062	\$ 9,906
Box Office, tours and concerts	9,508	9,968
Bar, event, parking, and rental	8,792	7,990
Government grants	6,172	6,023
Contributions from Canadian Opera Foundation	2,575	1,365
Other	1,408	1,272
Amortization of deferred capital contributions		
Four Seasons Centre	3,401	3,401
Other capital assets	428	385
	<u>\$ 43,346</u>	<u>\$ 40,310</u>
Total Revenue		

Expenses

Production	\$ 17,783	\$ 17,079
Bar, event and parking	5,565	4,964
General and administrative	4,357	4,399
Facilities	4,146	3,832
Communications	2,463	2,189
Advancement	2,180	2,038
Ensemble Studio Program	765	705
Education	425	429
Other	807	658
Depreciation of capital assets		
Four Seasons Centre	3,401	3,401
Other capital assets	623	497
Grants to Canadian Opera Foundation	820	87
	<u>43,335</u>	<u>40,278</u>
Total expenses		
Operating surplus	11	32
Transfer from internally restricted net assets	40	46
	<u></u>	<u></u>
Net change in operating net assets	51	78
Operating net assets, beginning of year	28,428	28,350
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 28,479</u>	<u>\$ 28,428</u>

Canadian Opera Foundation

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Canadian Opera Foundation (the “Foundation”) is a charitable organization that is independent of the Canadian Opera Company. The Foundation acquires, holds in trust and applies funds to assist in the development of opera for the benefit of the COC. Accordingly, these funds are not included in the accounts and financial statements of the COC. The audited market value of the net assets held by the Foundation as at December 31, 2016, totalled approximately \$37,527,000. In addition, at December 31, 2016, the Foundation administered funds totalling \$107,000 on behalf of the Company. This amount is not included in the statements of financial position or revenue, expenses, and fund balances of the Foundation. The following sets out the statements of financial position, as well as of revenue and expenses, for 2016 and 2015.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at December 31 (in thousands)

Assets	2016	2015
Miscellaneous receivables	\$ 26	\$ 23
Due from Canadian Opera Company	—	45
Investments	37,535	35,786
	<u>\$ 37,561</u>	<u>\$ 35,854</u>
Liabilities and Fund Balances		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 34	\$ 12
Fund balances	37,527	35,842
	<u>\$ 37,561</u>	<u>35,854</u>

STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENSE AND FUND BALANCES

As at December 31 (in thousands)

Revenue	2016	2015
Investment income	\$ 1,525	\$ 1,980
Donations and bequests	2,857	1,820
	<u>\$ 4,382</u>	<u>\$ 3,800</u>
Expenses		
Investment and counsel fees and services	\$ 245	\$ 209
Administration	12	16
	<u>257</u>	<u>225</u>
Net revenue before grants	4,125	3,575
Grants to Canadian Opera Company and individuals	2,440	1,929
Net revenue	1,685	1,646
Fund balances beginning of year	35,842	34,196
Fund balances, end of year	<u>\$ 37,527</u>	<u>\$ 35,842</u>

“A performance to resonate for a lifetime.” – The Globe and Mail

NEW COC PRODUCTION

NORMA

VINCENZO BELLINI

October 6 – November 5, 2016

COC co-production with San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Gran Teatre del Liceu (Barcelona)

The title role of Norma represents the pure essence of *bel canto* singing, posing fierce technical demands, requiring marathon-like stamina, and myriad emotive challenges. Sopranos Sondra Radvanovsky and Elza van den Heever proved themselves equal to the task by scaling daunting vocal lines with seemingly effortless ease, while delivering performances of layered dramatic complexity that thrilled our audience and produced standing ovations at every curtain call. In Kevin Newbury’s dramatically astute staging, Norma was

surrounded by a gifted cast of voices, including mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard’s nuanced portrayal of Norma’s friend and rival Adalgisa; tenor Russell Thomas’ powerful interpretation of the Roman consul Pollione; and Dmitry Ivashchenko’s fully realized take on Oroveso, Norma’s father. Maestro Stephen Lord’s work with the COC Orchestra provided a graceful reading of Bellini’s score, with a steady assurance that freed the voices on stage to risk—and unlock—the astonishing cathartic possibilities of this opera.



“Although we have set the production in a mythic, Game of Thrones-inspired milieu, Norma feels very contemporary to me.”
—Kevin Newbury, director



HOME TO THE BEST

The COC continues to attract the world’s best artists—the likes of Sondra Radvanovsky, Elza van den Heever, Christine Goerke, and many others—to our mainstage on a regular basis. Moreover, there are many opportunities for our community to experience the breathtaking artistry of world-class performers in intimate settings, like this surprise performance by tenor Russell Thomas at our Season Opening Party, attended by the very supporters whose generosity makes the COC’s artistic excellence possible from year to year.

🐦 Tonight I gave up William Tell @MetOpera. I'll tell you this. Seeing @CanadianOpera's powerfully driven Ariodante was well worth the trip.
— Paul Selar, @OperaChaser

🐦 Handel's Ariodante @CanadianOpera is spectacular. Brilliantly choreographed puppets. Standing ovation.
— John Bandler, @johnbandler

🐦 @AliceCoote Your Ariodante was first-rate. What an experience you shared with us—thank you! ('Scherza infida' broke me.)
— Eric Démore, @EricDemore

NEW COC PRODUCTION

ARIODANTE

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

October 16 – November 4, 2016
COC co-production with Festival d'Aix-en-Provence,
Dutch National Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago

Making his Handel debut, Maestro Johannes Debus led the COC Orchestra and Chorus with great precision, giving crystal-clear structure to the psychological drama of *Ariodante*. Soprano Jane Archibald as Ginevra navigated her character's arc with characteristically strong *coloratura* work; mezzo Alice Coote gave a commanding interpretation as Ariodante, especially in her shattering set-piece, "Scherza infida;" Ensemble Studio graduate soprano Ambur Braid offered a thoroughly committed performance as Ginevra's culpable—then repentant—maid Dalinda. Mezzo Varduhi Abrahamyan made

an impressive COC debut as the duplicitous priest Polinesso, as did baritone Johannes Weisser as the King of Scotland. The whole cast, which included tenor Owen McCausland (another Ensemble graduate) as Lurcanio and current Ensemble tenor Aaron Sheppard as Odoardo, demonstrated the finesse required for this difficult Baroque repertoire. Richard Jones' production, staged by revival director Benjamin Davis, transported the action to the Scottish Hebrides in the 1970s and integrated a choreographed realism that animated the opera as "one great hypnotic moving picture" (*The National Post*).

"We've added an almost choreographed realism that plays with the formality of 18th-century theatre and heightens the psychological workings of Ariodante." —Benjamin Davis, associate director



THE OTHER STRING SECTION

Operatic storytelling is unique in its ability to combine many art forms in the service of a larger dramatic whole. This production, for example, featured brilliant puppetry sequences that gave added pathos to Handel's beautiful dance numbers. The 12-person chorus was trained in the basics of the craft and a three-person professional puppetry team executed the delicate work of manipulating wooden figurines representing Ariodante and Ginevra.



“In these conflicted and confusing times, the simple celebration of humanity’s most basic truths... was welcome indeed.” —The Globe and Mail

COC REVIVAL

THE MAGIC FLUTE

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

January 19 – February 24, 2017

Staged by revival director (and Ensemble Studio graduate) Ashlie Corcoran, this Diane Paulus-conceived production featured whimsical animal costumes and garden party designs by Myung Hee Cho, as well as a play-within-a-play concept that engaged with the comedy, symbolism, and sheer buoyancy of Mozart’s optimistic love story. Ensemble Studio members past and present were everywhere in this show, with Andrew Haji and Owen McCausland both appearing as Tamino, Ambur Braid as Queen of the Night, and Jacqueline Woodley as Papagena. Sopranos Elena Tsallagova and Kirsten MacKinnon made strong COC debuts as Pamina. Aviva Fortunata, Emily D’Angelo,

Lauren Segal, Charles Sy, Neil Craighead, and Bruno Roy—all graduates or current members of the Ensemble Studio—lent their superb vocal gifts to the production, alongside Joshua Hopkins, Phillip Addis, Goran Jurić, Matt Boehler, Michael Colvin, and Martin Gantner. In his COC debut, Bernard Labadie conducted a marathon 12 performances, enchanting more than 26,000 audience members with the enduring popularity of this joyous work.

PRODUCTION GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY



PRODUCTION ORIGINALLY MADE POSSIBLE BY
THE CATHERINE AND MAXWELL MEIGHAN FOUNDATION



“The first time I saw The Magic Flute was back in 2011 here at the COC. Now, to be able to perform in that very same production, I couldn’t be more thrilled!”
— Tenor and Ensemble Studio graduate Andrew Haji



SEAT TO STAGE

Members of the COC’s Opera Club—a membership program for young professionals—enjoyed a post-performance gathering on the stage of the Four Seasons Centre to learn more about the production process of *The Magic Flute*, an opera which offers an excellent entry point into the wider world of the art form; COC General Director Alexander Neef pointed out key technical and artistic features of the space to the guests, including Daniel Faria (Opera Club member and Toronto gallerist) and Grant Hill.

“With her triumph, she cemented her arrival as the reigning American dramatic soprano of the day”

— The New York Times (on Christine Goerke’s debut as Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung*)

COC REVIVAL

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

RICHARD WAGNER

February 2 – 25, 2017

To conclude its three-year *Ring Cycle* journey, the COC assembled a cast of the world’s finest Wagnerians. Powerful, yet intimate, Tim Albery’s production of *Götterdämmerung* earned praise for bringing this epic tale down to earth and emphasizing the music drama’s humanity. Soprano Christine Goerke, hailed as “the Brünnhilde of her generation” (*The Globe and Mail*), received universal acclaim for her first *Götterdämmerung*, and was equally matched by tenor Andreas Schager, in a welcome COC debut, as Siegfried. Also making his company debut, bass Ain Anger brought a penetrating psychological depth to

the role of Siegfried’s nemesis, Hagen. The strong supporting cast also included Ensemble Studio graduate Ileana Montalbetti, Canadian bass Robert Pomakov, and Scottish mezzo-soprano Karen Cargill. Under the baton of COC Music Director Johannes Debus, conducting his first *Götterdämmerung*, the COC Orchestra soared to new heights, delivering a dynamic and intelligent interpretation of Wagner’s complex and powerful score.

PRODUCTION ORIGINALLY MADE POSSIBLE BY
KOLTER COMMUNITIES



“By revisiting the Ring scores, our ensemble builds its collective identity—what I like to call an ‘orchestral DNA.’ Wagner makes you understand better than any other composer what it means to play together as an orchestra.”
— Johannes Debus,
COC Music Director



PHILHANTHROPIC LEADERSHIP

COC Board member Jack Whiteside has made a multi-year commitment to bringing the best voices to Toronto, including renowned soprano Christine Goerke. The COC will continue to be a launching pad for significant role debuts for artists of generational importance thanks to the visionary leadership of supporters like Mr. Whiteside.



Big thanks to @CanadianOpera for mounting extraordinary #thinkpiece #LouisRiel Capacity crowd @alexanderncoc @johannesdebus orch sounded fab — Brian Current, @bcurrent

@CanadianOpera #COCLouisRiel gives us something rare: an opera realized as a self-aware, contested, problematic and relevant art form. — Ian Henderson, @IHender

NEW COC PRODUCTION

LOUIS RIEL

HARRY SOMERS

April 20 – May 13, 2017

COC co-production with Canada's National Arts Centre



"The demands of Riel's history remain ever more important as we reckon with current injustices and the necessary process of 'Truth and Reconciliation.'"

—Director Peter Hinton

The all-Canadian creative team and cast of this new production, led by Peter Hinton, opened up Harry Somers' landmark opera to a thought-provoking reinterpretation. At the heart of this project was the company's first-ever large-scale collaboration with Indigenous artists and communities: from non-opera performers, like Jani Lauzon, Cole Alvis, Billy Merasty, and Justin Many Fingers, to the company debuts of soprano Joanna Burt (Sara Riel) and bass-baritone Everett Morrison (Wandering Spirit), to a silent chorus whose presence placed poetic pressure on the colonial biases of settler narratives, both historic and contemporary. Baritone Russell Braun delivered an inspired portrayal of Louis Riel, alongside a large cast that included mezzo-soprano Allyson McHardy, soprano Simone Osborne, baritone James Westman, and a panoply of voices both established and emerging. Maestro Debus led the COC Orchestra and Chorus through Somers' prismatic score, creating moments ranging from elemental rage to lyric beauty.

THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES ITS UNDERWRITERS:
THE CATHERINE AND MAXWELL MEIGHEN FOUNDATION
PHILIP DECK & KIMBERLEY BOZAK
ASPER FOUNDATION
THE MAX CLARKSON FAMILY FOUNDATION

HOWARD & SARAH D. SOLOMON FOUNDATION
IN HONOUR OF GERARD MORTIER
EARLAINE COLLINS
J. HANS KLUGE

WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM
MARK & GAIL APPEL
MARGARET HARRIETT CAMERON
CATHERINE FAUQUIER
SALLY HOLTON
MICHEL HORN & CORNELIA SCHUH
MICHAEL & LINDA HUTCHEON
THE MICHAEL AND SONJA KOERNER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
PETER LEVITT & MAI WHY
JOHN D. MCKELLAR
TRINA MCQUEEN
ROGER D. MOORE
SUE MORTIMER
DR. SHIRLEY C. NEUMAN
TIM & FRANCES PRICE
DR. JOSEPH SO
PHILIP SOMERVILLE
DR. JOHN STANLEY & DR. HELMUT REICHENBÄCHER
THE STRATTON TRUST
FRANÇOISE SUTTON
JOHN WRIGHT & CHUNG-WAI CHOW
JOYCE YOUNG



DEFINING A UNIQUE SENSE OF PURPOSE

In the course of mounting this new production, the COC engaged with Indigenous scholars, artists, and community members through numerous events—from performances to consultations to a major interdisciplinary symposium at the University of Toronto—to initiate an ongoing commitment to relationship-building, learning, and acknowledgment.

“A joy to witness” — The Globe and Mail

COC REVIVAL

TOSCA

GIACOMO PUCCINI

April 30 – May 20, 2017

COC co-production with Norwegian National Opera and Ballet

Against the background of 19th-century Rome—all marble chapels and sumptuous costumes—the melodrama of Puccini’s *Tosca* was revisited in this beloved, thrillingly taut COC production. Paul Curran, who returned as director, grounded the high emotions of political intrigue in a feminist reading worthy of its famed diva. Sopranos Adrienne Pieczonka and Keri Alekma—both veteran Toscas—earned rapturous praise for their finely-tuned performances. Tenors Marcelo Puente and Kamen Chaney moved audiences’ hearts with their passionate portrayals of Tosca’s lover Cavaradossi, while bass-baritones Markus Marquardt and Craig Colclough conveyed the exquisite villainy of Chief of Police Scarpia. The rest of the uniformly strong cast included Musa Ngqungwana, Donato di Stefano, Joel Sorensen, Giles Tomkins, Bruno Roy, and an energetic group of 20 young singers from the Canadian Children’s Opera Company. Winnipeg-born conductor Keri-Lynn Wilson made her COC debut, deftly leading the orchestra and chorus through Puccini’s complex score.

PRODUCTION ORIGINALLY MADE POSSIBLE BY
DELIA M. MOOG

PRODUCTION GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY



*“I have long believed that opera is essentially about sex, religion, and politics... No opera encapsulates these elements of human existence quite like Puccini’s *Tosca*.”*

— Director Paul Curran



TRIO MAGNIFICO

This spring Show One Productions, in association with the COC, presented Anna Netrebko’s highly anticipated Canadian debut alongside tenor Yusif Eyvazov (right) and baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky (left). Trio Magnifico represented an important event for the COC, reaffirming our stage as a destination for the world’s most sought-after performers.



INVESTING IN YOUNG ARTISTS

The COC is committed to supporting young opera professionals with an array of integrated training and mentorship programs. While our core practices in this area are well-established, we continue to pioneer new methodologies and approaches in training; to expand the scope of development opportunities in Canada; and to advance new platforms to ensure that the next generation of opera professionals—from singers to instrumentalists to administrators—can reach their full potential in a global opera environment.

ENSEMBLE STUDIO

The COC's core training program has been fostering young artists since 1980 and has launched the careers of more than 230 Canadian opera professionals.

Back row (l-r)

Emily D'Angelo, mezzo-soprano*

Stéphane Mayer, pianist/intern coach

Samantha Pickett, soprano

Charles Sy, tenor*

Lauren Eberwein, mezzo-soprano

Megan Quick, mezzo-soprano

Bruno Roy, baritone

Front row (l-r)

Aaron Sheppard, tenor*

Danika Lorén, soprano

Hyejin Kwon, pianist/intern coach*

**Graduating artist*



CENTRE STAGE

On November 3, 2016, Canada's premier vocal competition once again shared the richness of talent in this country with our public and supporters, showcasing a cross-section of voices drawn from coast-to-coast.

"One of the best experiences of my life. The COC team and other participants in the competition were inspiring, talented, and incredibly supportive. I gained new friendships and working relationships all across the continent, and I'm so grateful for the experience." — Simone McIntosh, First Prize (the Chair's Prize) Winner (at right during her performance at Centre Stage)



INTRODUCING: COMPANY-IN-RESIDENCE

In 2016, the COC introduced a residency program for emerging opera companies, with our first participant being the Toronto-based collective, Against the Grain Theatre. As part of the program, the COC makes available its administrative space and resources; mentorship involving different departments; opportunities for job shadowing, as well as invitations to observe and/or participate in company meetings and events. The Company-in-Residence program plays an important exploratory role within the COC's larger commitment to supporting a vibrant ecosystem of Canadian artists and creative professionals.

A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES

For young Canadian singers, the Ensemble Studio provides unparalleled access to internationally renowned mentors, teachers, and visiting artists, as well as a host of specialists—like a performance kinetics consultant, financial and tax consultants, nutrition coaches and foreign language coaches—whose collaboration creates a profoundly holistic training model, addressing all aspects of an opera career. A chief strength of the Ensemble Studio is the opportunity to perform in a variety of settings, from community concerts to public recitals to mainstage showcases, as well as the learning and growth that comes from understudying major parts.

“The COC was very open in providing and asking what it was that we as young artists needed to develop further. To be able to have your entire vocal team of trainers, teachers, and coaches sitting in the hall and giving one-on-one feedback, while you experiment and sing from any part of the stage is an absolute gift.”
—Graduating Ensemble Studio tenor Charles Sy



Above: Soprano Danika Lorèn and tenor Charles Sy took to the mainstage for *An Evening with the Ensemble Studio*, an annual showcase for the COC’s Ensemble artists, with the full COC Orchestra, conducted by Music Director Johannes Debus.

Below left: Ensemble Head Liz Upchurch at the piano and Head Vocal Consultant Wendy Nielsen work with bass-baritone Iain MacNeil during their TEDx talk, *How to build an opera singer*.



Below right: Mezzo-soprano Emily D’Angelo in consultation with composer Ana Sokolović as they prepare the world premiere of *dawn always begins in the bones*.



MAKING CONNECTIONS: ORCHESTRA ACADEMY



Playing in an opera orchestra and working with singers requires a specific set of skills and experiences, yet these are not normally part of standard university or conservatory curricula. To address that training gap, in 2014 the COC introduced the Orchestra Academy in collaboration with The Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Music. In 2016/2017 the program expanded by partnering with the Schulich School of Music at McGill University to reach an even wider pool of student players.

Participants Madlen Breckbill (viola), James Churchill (cello), Jesse Dietschi (bass), Heng-Han Hou (violin), and Jung Tsai (violin) drew significant benefits from the hands-on intensive, which included playing the opening night of the COC’s *Götterdämmerung*, giving a public performance in the Free Concert Series in the Richad Bradshaw Amphitheatre (left), and taking part in masterclasses and private sessions alongside singers, members of the COC artistic administration, and visiting music staff.

CREATING COMMUNITY IMPACT

As one of Canada’s leading arts organizations, we embrace the responsibility of building communities through our work; of creating meaningful learning experiences through more than 400 education and outreach events; and of participating in creative collaboration that enriches our schools, neighbourhoods, and public spaces with the transformative power of the arts.

ENSEMBLE STUDIO SCHOOL TOUR

The COC brought opera to thousands of young people across Ontario this fall with its touring production of Matthew Aucoin’s *Second Nature*. This thought-provoking opera set in a dystopian future tells the story of two teenagers who venture outside their artificial habitat to re-engage with a deteriorating planet.

“In the 21st century, everything is available at the click of a mouse—except for the power of unamplified human music, which must be experienced live. Opera is very good at this deep, direct form of communication, and it’s something kids can certainly feel if it’s done right.”
—Composer Matthew Aucoin

Right: Bruno Roy (above) with Emily D’Angelo and Charles Sy in a scene from *Second Nature*.

Below: Making new friends and learning new things, two young audience members enjoy a performance of *Second Nature*.



SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The COC works directly with teachers and schools throughout the GTA to develop and implement a wide variety of programming that connects both students and educators to the powerful medium of operatic theatre: from long-range collaborative projects embedded in the classroom, to field trips, custom workshops, and building tours.



DEBUS AT HOME AND ABROAD

The COC’s Music Director Johannes Debus made his Metropolitan Opera debut in December 2016, conducting Richard Strauss’ *Salome* in a production by Jürgen Flimm, with Patricia Racette in the title role. This provides another reminder that our core artistic team represents some of the most important opera artists in the world today. In fact, Johannes returned to the Met podium in September 2017 for Offenbach’s *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

Among other engagements throughout the season, Debus and the COC Orchestra participated in the opening concert of The Royal Conservatory’s 21C Music Festival this spring, performing a world premiere (Brian Current’s *Naka*), as well as several other works by contemporary composers, including Matthew Aucoin. By embracing opportunities like this, the COC contributes to the larger fabric of collaboration and creativity in our city.



COC Music Director Johannes Debus with soprano Patricia Racette.

SCOTIABANK AFTER SCHOOL OPERA PROGRAM

Offered at five locations throughout the GTA, the Scotiabank After School Opera Program is an essential community arts initiative that develops performance and music skills, while nurturing self-confidence and teamwork through the uniquely collaborative experience of opera. Every season, more than 1,000 children experience the thrill of working with a professional opera artist to create their own original work.

“What a wonderful program! Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to making such amazing opportunities realities for so many children. Wednesday opera is a total highlight of their week!”
—Lana Thompson, mother of ASOP participant

Young participants in the Scotiabank After School Opera Program celebrate all that opera has to offer.



CREATING ACCESS

Whether it's initiatives supported by individual philanthropists, civic action partnerships, or corporate-sponsored programs, the COC pursues a number of avenues in ensuring continued accessibility of our art form and an organizational embrace of openness and inclusivity. These initiatives welcome new communities, increase public understanding and appreciation of the COC, and support long-term institutional growth.

CITY BUILDING

Featuring 75 performances and more than 400 artists from Canada and around the world, the Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre connected nearly 12,000 people to arts programming in our city in 16/17, showcasing everything from challenging, boundary-breaking work to celebrated classical repertoire.

"Live music for a dedicated and appreciative audience in the heart of our great city—what could be better!"

— Jonathan Crow, Artistic Director of Toronto Summer Music Festival, Concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra

"This is the Canadian Opera Company's gift to the city; all are welcome to sit on the steps of the amphitheatre." — The Toronto Star

Our Free Concert Series showcases a wide range of artistic expression in performance, including vocal, dance, jazz, chamber, piano, and world music.



GROWING COMMUNITIES

Since its inception in 2016, the Opera Access for New Canadians program—delivered in partnership with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship—has welcomed more than 400 refugees and newcomers to the opera house. The COC is deeply invested in efforts to open up our cultural space to wider ownership and participation, and we will continue to encourage community connections and access through our programming and facilities.



PRE-PERFORMANCE OPERA CHATS

More than 16,000 people enhanced their appreciation of an opera by hearing from writers, lecturers, arts programmers, musicologists, and professional singers before attending a performance.

🐦 Love this audience outreach w/ pre-opera chats @CanadianOpera—getting a #Tosca tutorial before the show! #operarocks #COCrocks
— AlyssoS, @Lakeside252

LIVING OPERA

Generously sponsored by The Great-West Life Assurance Company, Living Opera is a customizable workshop program that allows students in Grades 9 to 12 to explore career opportunities in the arts by interacting with professional opera singers, instrumentalists, stage technicians, and arts administrators. Participants receive a crash course in opera history as well as a backstage tour of the opera house. The program promotes continued engagement with the art form after workshops are completed by inviting participants to experience a live mainstage performance.

🐦 Love @CanadianOpera rehearsals that open opera to new audiences...lots of students, newcomers & young professionals at tonight's show! — Emily Macrae, @emilyamacrae

Living Opera participants take part in a hands-on workshop at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, prior to watching a rehearsal.



UPLIFTING ART

Partnering with more than 40 community organizations in the GTA, the COC's Sun Life Financial Share the Opera program provided access to opera to nearly 1,000 youth and family members who may not have had the opportunity to experience live performance due to economic or health reasons.

"Last night was the most incredible experience for my young patients. I brought six teens all in various stages of illness or survivors of trauma, and it was just an incredible night. The whole evening was amazing. All of the teams that I work with expressed an interest in attending again."

—Morgan Livingstone, Certified Child Life Specialist who works with Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and SickKids



OPERA UNDER 30 PRESENTED BY TD

The COC was the first arts organization in Toronto to establish a discount program for young people. Twenty-two years later we're still hard at work bringing the next generation of opera-goers their first "aha" moments.

🐦 @HeldenMommy woah—that was the first time i've ever been to an opera it was cool as heck ! thanks a bunch for a rad show

— David Grenzowski, @david_is_neato

🐦 @david_is_neato... and you chose Götterdämmerung @CanadianOpera ?! That is HARD CORE!! So happy you thought it was cool! Come back!!

— Christine Goerke, @HeldenMommy

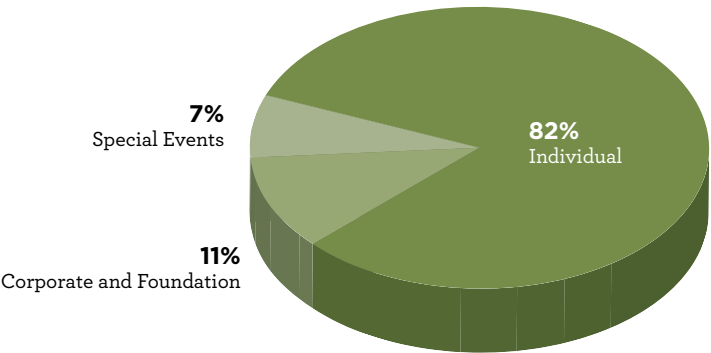
🐦 Got a ticket for #COCGötterdämmerung thanks to the @CanadianOpera Under 30 program! Can't wait to see the finale of this epic operatic saga.

— Carly Chalmers, @carlyjchalmers

MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Extraordinary moments on stage, unforgettable arts experiences, and transformative community impact—our passionate supporters make all this possible every season through their generosity and involvement. We gratefully acknowledge their commitment to the COC’s diverse activities, programs, and future planning initiatives.

\$13.9 MILLION
TOTAL FUNDRAISING REVENUE
(combined operating and endowment)



Above: Ensemble tenor Charles Sy performs on the Four Seasons Centre stage before discussing the relationship between the singer and conductor at a behind-the-scenes learning opportunity for our supporters.



Above right: Artists and donors mingled at the opening night of *Louis Riel*.

Right: Soprano and Ensemble graduate Ambur Braid was at the COC last winter for performances of the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*. She took time out to perform for Golden Circle members at a spring event held at the home of Canadian Opera Foundation Chair Phil Deck, with Hyejin Kwon (also an Ensemble graduate) at the piano.



LIFE TRUSTEES COUNCIL

The Life Trustees Council salutes the leaders of the COC community whose efforts have been integral to the company's artistic evolution and transformative history of accomplishment.

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FORGING (RE)CONNECTIONS

This past season we unveiled a new program especially designed to maintain our connection with former Board members and to re-energize their involvement through a unique slate of engagement events and one-of-a-kind learning opportunities, the Emeritus Council.

EMERITUS COUNCIL

The COC Emeritus Council, led by the Executive Committee, salutes those Board Members who have completed their term and whose leadership efforts have been integral to the company's artistic evolution and transformative history of accomplishment.

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A legacy of leadership, passion, and philanthropy achieved through individual lifetime giving in support of the Canadian Opera Company.

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*Advancing the art form
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*Building a community of world-class artists,
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*Encouraging the next generation
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Right: Guests attend the Season Closing
Party in the COC's beautiful Max Tanenbaum
Courtyard.

**COMMITTED TO
THE FUTURE**

\$37.5 million

Total endowment assets
(as of December 31, 2016)

4.7%

1-year growth

48%

5-year growth (2012-2016)



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THE DONOR EXPERIENCE

We celebrate our supporters with a season-long array of more than 30 membership events that enrich the experience of opera through exclusive artist conversations, performances, backstage access, and more.

From top to bottom: Guests at the Season Closing Party in the COC's Max Tanenbaum Courtyard.

Soprano and Ensemble graduate Simone Osborne explores the music of Harry Somers' *Louis Riel* with a live demonstration for the company's community of supporters.

General Director Alexander Neef speaks with *Magic Flute* director and Ensemble graduate Ashlie Corcoran during the Working Rehearsal Dinner.



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From an on-stage gala, to live-auction bidding, to uncanny partying, the COC's special fundraiser events in 2016/2017 provided unique experiences for supporting opera and encouraging its emerging voices.

Left: At Centre Stage, artists and guests enjoy an on-stage dinner by Nota Bene executive chef David Lee. Above: Ensemble tenor Charles Sy shares the stage with Canadian disco-pop sensation (and opera fan) Kiesza during Operanation.

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PAGE 11: main image: Christine Goerke as Brunnhilde and Andreas Schager as Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung* (COC, 2017), photo: Chris Hutcheson; bottom image: photo: Gaetz Photography. **PAGE 12:** main image: A scene from *Louis Riel* (COC, 2017), photo: Michael Cooper; bottom image: V'ni Dansi's Louis Riel Metis Dancers, photo: Kevin Lloyd (2017). **PAGE 13:** main image: Marcelo Puente as Cavaradossi and Adrienne Pieczonka as Tosca in *Tosca* (COC, 2017), photo: Michael Cooper; bottom image: photo: Vladimir Kevorkov, c/o Show One Productions. **PAGE 14:** top image, photo: Bronwen Sharp; bottom image: Michael Cooper. **PAGE 15:** top image, photo:

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