

21 | 22 SEASON SPONSOR: BMO



2021/2022 ANNUAL REPORT





A SEASON LIKE NO OTHER



The Canadian Opera Company's 2021/2022 season represented a critical turning point for the organization and this report highlights our main accomplishments across a spectrum of opera programming of all

First off, we launched a first-of-its-kind program of digital offerings while working towards a long-awaited—and hugely successful—return to live performance, both at our opera house at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, as well as the freshly rebranded Canadian Opera Company Theatre at 277 Front St. E., where we presented new, boundary-breaking works that showcased new voices and expanded the palette of operatic storytelling.

Holding performances after more than two years was a high watermark for the organization, both because it signaled the resumption of sustainable, revenuegenerating operations that are core to our mission as an opera producer, and because it brought our artistic and audience communities together again—reigniting the all-important collective energy, power, and shared investment that live performance inspires.

Digital Programming

Guided by the overarching goal of rebuilding a robust audience pipeline for future engagement and ticket sales, we developed a Free Digital Membership program that expanded our online audience community by approximately 60%—a remarkable accomplishment that shows the strength of our community's engagement and the impact of our programming.

Community Partnerships and Programs

Through 19 different community projects and programs in 21/22, we continued building partnerships with organizations, neighbourhoods, schools, and major cultural institutions to connect people of all ages and backgrounds with the power of music.

Whether it's through the continued adaptation of established programs like Opera Makers and Youth Opera Labs, the multiplier effect of partnerships like our collaboration with the Art Gallery of Ontario, or the launch of a new initiative like the multi-faceted Showcase Series—a performance series exploring the beauty of language, music, and cultural identity—our Community Partnerships and Programs teams continued to inspire and engage audiences in 21/22 to share opera as a living, relevant form of cultural expression.

Expanding Artist Development

Building on the company's long-standing reputation for excellence in lifting up emerging artists, our Ensemble Studio delivered more than 1,800 individualized hours of professional development for nine resident opera professionals in 21/22. These opportunities included auditions and working sessions with in-demand industry professionals from across North America and Europe, a range of coachings, lessons, and classes, and—most important of all for artists at this stage of their careers—plenty of performance opportunities to refine their craft and grow through real-life experience.

Moving Forward, Together!

We were able to accomplish so much thanks to agile work of our administrative and artistic communities, as well as the committed support of our passionate Board of Directors and thousands of donors, audiences, and volunteer leaders.

Thank you for working with us to strengthen the company, while growing the breadth and strength of connection we deliver, both in-person and online.

Perryn Leech General Director



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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/2122AnnualReport or scan here:







2022 LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In January 2022, the COC proudly announced a collaborative new initiative and approach to land acknowledgment: **The Land Acknowledgement Commissioning Program**.

In working with Indigenous artists to co-create a visual land acknowledgement and artist statement, the program invites each participant to bring their own personal perspectives and relationships to the work, as well as reflections on the cultural moment and the COC's artistic season.

This season, Métis mezzo-soprano **Rebecca Cuddy** was named as inaugural artist collaborator, alongside *Fantasma* director and dramaturg **Julie McIsaac**, who contributed to the creation and documentation of the installation as inaugural staff collaborator.

"The concept of the piece is that no one works alone, no one does anything alone," says Cuddy. Her three-dimensional, experiential installation where the water meets the land features a sculptural component that showcases her experience with beadwork, as well as an immersive sound element that was prominently displayed at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts and the Canadian Opera Company Theatre, for all in-person audiences to interact with and explore.

In addition, a filmed version of the installation and accompanying text preceded all COC digital offerings from January through the end of season. More on this program can be found at coc.ca/LandAcknowledgement.

ABOUT WHERE THE WATER MEETS THE LAND

A music stand is wrapped in black velveteen with red velvet borders and tied together with white organza ribbon. The velveteen has colourful beadwork which transforms the music stand into a living structure. The beadwork runs up the 'stem' of the stand and blooms across the back.

At the centre of the beadwork is a bright orange blossom, a gesture to the confirmation of mass graves at Residential Schools. At the bottom of the stand is vibrant, sheer blue-green fabric that stretches out in a circle around the stand. Roots made from deer hide protrude from the 'stem' and spread out over the water. As the viewer walks around the sculpture, they witness the water sparkle and shimmer; there are beads nestled into the fabric to mimic the glint of the sun on the water. Perched on the stand is Ian Cusson's composition *Fire* with text by Joy Harjo. The exposed text reads, "I am the continuance of blue sky, I am the throat of the mountains."

As the viewer circles the sculpture, sounds travel with them: Ian Cusson playing *Fire* on the piano, *Maple Sugar* on the fiddle, various bird calls, water, crickets, and a crackling fire.

ANEW STREAM OF ARTISTIC CREAT LEAD DONOR, DIGITAL INITIATIVES DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT Canada Pamela and Paul Austin The P. Austin Family Foundation

In our 2021/22 season, we connected artists and audiences through a COC first: free digital streaming, from coast to coast to coast.

Captured at the magnificent Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, we delivered new purpose-produced concerts and performances every month, featuring extraordinary Canadian and international artists.

These efforts led to meaningful opportunities for artists and significantly expanded COC audiences and communities around our creative work.

60% growth in our online community

8 new full-length digital productions

18,000+ hours of performance footage watched

135 countries tuned in

10.4 million+ impressions generated

IN CONCERT: RUSSELL BRAUN AND TAMARA WILSON

Two of opera's best-loved stars, baritone Russell Braun (right) and soprano Tamara Wilson, reunited with COC Music Director Johannes Debus and the COC Orchestra to mark our artistic return to the stage for the first time in 19 months with a concert program of iconic arias and orchestral pieces from Bizet, Puccini, Verdi, and Wagner, among others.

"This first proper digital item from the COC is something to be proud of." Schmopera





PUCCINI'S GIANNI SCHICCHI

Staged by British theatre director Amy Lane, this lighthearted, brilliantly paced comedy starred rising South Korean soprano Hera Hyesang Park alongside British baritone Roland Wood. The famous one-act opera features some of Puccini's most memorable music, including the show-stopper soprano aria, "O mio babbino caro."

"The COC has brought together an excellent, nearly all-Canadian cast, made up of mostly current and former Ensemble members... a finely choreographed show, down to the last turn of the head and flick of a finger, always in sync with the music." Opera Canada

ESPIRAL BY OKAN

In this concert, OKAN performed selections from *Espiral*, their 2021 JUNO Award-winning album, fusing jazz, folk, and global rhythms with Afro-Cuban roots in a performance that drew upon a multiplicity of musical influences and the multicultural mosaic of Toronto.

"It's not very often you hear Afro-Cuban roots and jazz ensemble OKAN programmed at one of the world's premier opera companies...after checking them out online, we loved what we heard." NOW Toronto



MOZART'S REQUIEM

In this multi-disciplinary presentation in collaboration with Against the Grain Theatre, creators Joel Ivany and Johannes Debus invited us to reckon with the impact of COVID-19 and devastating losses—and heal together through the power of Mozart's astonishingly moving *Requiem*. Featuring artists Midori Marsh, Andrew Haji, and Vartan Gabrielian from the COC Ensemble Studio training program, as well as Kwagiulth and Stó:lo First Nations mezzo-soprano Marion Newman, this *Requiem* was a showcase of the next generation of voices in opera.

"A compelling mix of music, text, and visual elements that makes you focus on the actual words of the Requiem more closely...Mozart's masterpiece becomes even more sweeping in its impact." Ludwig Van Toronto





IN WINTER

Featuring Vivaldi's instantly recognizable and exhilarating "Winter" section of "The Four Seasons," classic songbook selections like "Deck the Halls," and, for the centrepiece of the program, an exciting new commission by composer Ian Cusson, who sets text by Métis writer Katherena Vermette, for solo, chorus, and orchestra in a meditative composition entitled "In Winter," the COC Orchestra under Music Director Johannes Debus, the COC Chorus, and artists of the COC Ensemble Studio (including Matthew Cairns and Charlotte Siegel, pictured left) came together for a concert that explored and celebrated winter.

"The music [of "In Winter"] is complex, colourful and evocative, and entirely at one with the text." operaramblings

VOICES OF MOUNTAINS

Fusing classical and contemporary opera repertoire with dance, *Voices of Mountains* featured the world premiere of composer Ian Cusson's "Fire." Mezzosopranos Rebecca Cuddy and Marion Newman performed with pianist Gordon Gerrard from the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, with choreography from Aria Evans (right) set against some of Toronto's most stunning backdrops.

"Right from this first piece, the integration of movement and music is clear." The Dance Current



IN CONCERT: JANE ARCHIBALD

Canadian opera star Jane Archibald—one of the country's most electric opera voices—delivered a tour-de-force vocal performance in a program of sparkling coloratura arias from throughout the history of opera and beyond—from George Frideric Handel to Leonard Bernstein.





BARTÓK'S BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE

In this hybrid work, director Atom Egoyan melded his award-winning film Felicia's Journey with Hungarian composer Béla Bartók's one-act opera Bluebeard's Castle. Featuring the COC Orchestra under the baton of Music Director Johannes Debus, with Kyle Ketelsen (left, as Bluebeard) and Krisztina Szabó (Judith) singing and acting on-stage at the magnificent Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts.

"Demanding, emotionally excruciating, this is a production of considerable transformative power."

Opera Going Toronto



A RETURN TO THE OPERA HOUSE

After more than two years of performance disruption, the return of live opera at the Four Seasons Centre was a high watermark for the organization in 21/22. Our in-person productions were greeted with extraordinary critical acclaim and public support, reflected in an average attendance capacity of 94% and multiple sold-out performances.

More important still, the moment served as an affirmation of the relevance, connection, and passion that our core work continues to inspire. As we heard from so many of our audience members and supporters, nothing compares to the power of live opera.

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/2122AnnualReport** or scan here:







"A triumphant return to the stage" proclaimed *The Globe and Mail* in their review of Verdi's *La Traviata*, our first in-person opera production at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in more than two years. An outstanding cast led by Amina Edris (Violetta), Matthew Polenzani (Alfredo), and Simone Piazzola (Giorgio Germont), a beautiful and dramatically compelling production by director Arin Arbus with costumes by Cait O'Connor, and glorious work from the COC Music Director Johannes Debus and the COC Orchestra all combined to produce an exquisite, flawless rendition of this tragic Verdi romance.

PRODUCTION SPONSOR



CO-PRODUCTION WITH HOUSTON GRAND OPERA AND LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO

"The COC Orchestra was taut and shimmering with [Johannes] Debus on the podium, and under the direction of chorus master Sandra Horst, the COC Chorus brought precision and personality to the bustling crowd scenes... this La Traviata is a joy to see on stage."

The Globe & Mail

"Are there enough positive adjectives to fully describe this amazing production? Totally brilliant, and I was standing throughout!"

Arlene R., audience member



Pairing the moving pathos of Verdi's *Traviata* with the lighter fare of *The Magic Flute* created all the more entry points to our programming this spring and highlighted the rich variety of opera as a storytelling medium. For this staging of Mozart's timeless classic, we revived the colourful 2011 production by Diane Paulus (staged here by Anna Theodosakis), featuring fantastical costumes and a charming 18th-century garden setting. German conductor Patrick Lange deftly led the COC Orchestra through a score that is as playful as it is deeply philosophical on eternal themes like love, wisdom, and truth. Meanwhile, the cast served up an impressive showcase of homegrown talent—Ensemble Studio artists both past and present, including Anna-Sophie Neher (Pamina), Gordon Bintner (Papageno), and Midori Marsh (Papagena) winning over audiences and earned accolades from the press for their performances.

PRODUCTION ORIGINALLY MADE POSSIBLE BY

The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation

"I thought The Magic Flute was truly MAGICAL. I have never seen a production with so much whimsy and vitality. The singing was first rate." Audience member

OPERA OF ALL SCALES

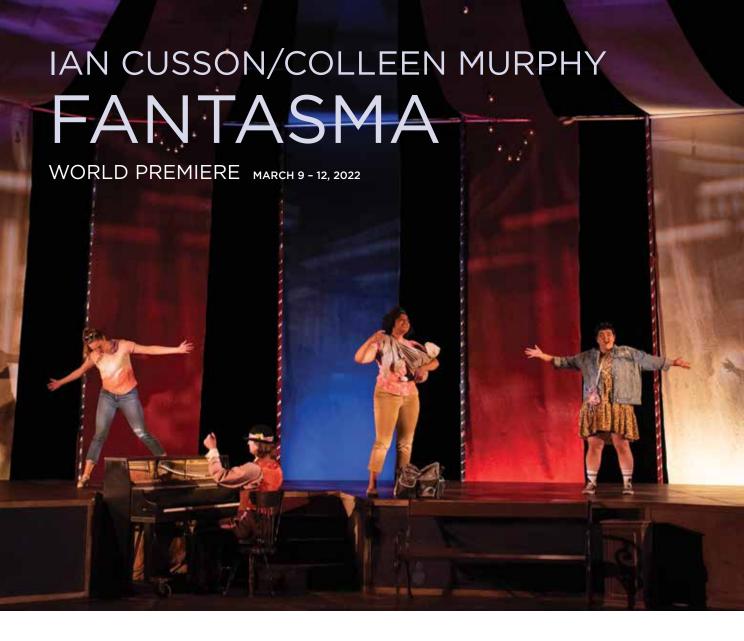
Under the vision of General Director Perryn Leech, we successfully activated our Canadian Opera Company Theatre in 21/22 as a space that embodies our commitment to opera of all scales, especially the presentation of bold and boundarybreaking works that expand the communities, voices, and storytelling potential of live opera.



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A new work from Métis composer (and COC Academy resident) Ian Cusson, with a libretto by Colleen Murphy, and direction and dramaturgy by COC Academy graduate Julie McIsaac, Fantasma presented a haunting, contemporary ghost story set at an old-fashioned carnival to audiences at the Canadian Opera Company Theatre. Featuring a cast of current Ensemble Studio artists and recent graduates, Fantasma earned a 4N review from NOW Magazine, with critic Glenn Sumi writing "Opera companies are constantly wondering how to woo new and younger audiences to their art form. Ian Cusson and Colleen Murphy's Fantasma could do the trick. It's got a talented young cast, an atmospheric score, a clear and accessible English libretto."

"The chamber opera weaves broad humour with tender pathos, beauty with tragedy into a tale that explores themes of courage, compassion, and loss." The Toronto Star



We closed our season with *The Queen In Me*, an original piece created and performed by interdisciplinary artist Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野 (they/them), who courageously combined personal experience with comedy and drama to explore the many ways that race, gender, and sexuality are policed in the opera industry. A co-presentation with Amplified Opera (COC's Disruptor-in-Residence), Nightwood Theatre, and Theatre Gargantua, *The Queen In Me* also attracted partnership support from Pride Toronto, all of which highlighted the possibilities in programming bold, boundary-breaking work at the Canadian Opera Company Theatre to support community connection and the vital energy in creating spaces for new voices, audiences, and perspectives.

"Absolutely loved this show! Some of the best theatre I have ever seen." Audience member

CO-PRESENTED BY







UNDERWRITTEN IN PART BY



MAJOR CULTURAL PARTNER



ENSEMBLE STUDIO

The COC's Ensemble Studio continues to attract Canada's best emerging singers and musicians with its trailblazing approach to artist development and mentorship.

Blending rigorous artistic coaching and masterclasses with invaluable mainstage experience, as well as practical lessons in managing business, marketing, and personal well-being, Ensemble Studio members are working professionals with access to some of the best training and support available—it's no wonder that many of the program's graduates have quickly moved on to become internationally-acclaimed opera stars.

Here's a look at the breadth of training covered in a single season:

- **915** hours of music coachings
- **310** hours of lyric diction and language coachings in English, French, Italian, German, and Hungarian
- 260 hours of performance kinetics coachings
- **126** hours of vocal lessons
 - 47 hours of dramatic coachings
 - **45** hours of group classes and professional development opportunities (including round tables, auditions of industry stakeholders, repertoire classes)
 - 29 hours of creative living and wellness sessions
 - 14 hours of workshopping new music or libretto
 - 5 hours of conducting lessons

2021/2022 ARTISTS

Pictured below, from left to right:

Midori Marsh, soprano GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY MARCIA LEWIS BROWN

Jonah Spungin, baritone GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY CATHERINE FAUQUIER

Matthew Cairns, tenor GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY JANET STUBBS

Frances Thielmann, pianist

GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY ARIAS: CANADIAN OPERA STUDENT DEVELOPMENT FUND

Alex Halliday, bass-baritone GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY SUE MORTIMER

Jamie Groote, soprano generously sponsored by patricia & frank mills

Vladimir Soloviev, pianist GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY MARJORIE & ROY LINDEN, AND BRIAN WILKS

Charlotte Siegel, soprano GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY JOY LEVINE

Vartan Gabrielian, bass
GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY MARJORIE & ROY LINDEN, AND BRIAN WILKS



CITY SESSIONS

Throughout the 21/22 season, we captured the vibrant, resilient, and inspiring spirit of Toronto with The Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre: City Sessions. These short digital performances were created to support the city's cultural ecosystem with much-needed performance opportunities after a period without live performance, and to provide a globally inspired, locally focused array of artists with a platform to share the music and stories that resonated most with them.

Performers included renowned Iranian-Canadian instrumentalists **Padideh Ahrarnejad** and **Ali Massoudi**, leading Canadian jazz musicians and multiple JUNO-award winners, **Mike Downes** and **Robi Botos**, internationally acclaimed pipa virtuoso, **Wen Zhao**, and more. In total, City Sessions received over 137,462 views across our social media platforms.

PRESENTED BY









SHOWCASE SERIES

Taking place in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre at the Four Seasons Centre for Performing Arts, the Showcase Series features artists and creatives from the Asian, African and Caribbean, and Latin American diasporas, to celebrate and honour these many cultures and histories through creative expression, storytelling, and cultural participation.

This series continues to fulfill the Canadian Opera Company's mandate for increased access to the arts through developing new relationships and partnerships with diverse communities and championing culturally responsive and engaged learning opportunities.

The inaugural Showcase Series, taking place in May 2022, celebrated Asian Heritage Month with five events that explored the beauty of music, cultural identity, and language, and the vast range of identities and experiences within Asian communities. Participants experienced musical performances featuring Chinese calligraphy with Master Man Kuen Wong and contemporary choreographer Naishi Wang, Japanese folk drumming traditions with Nagata Shachu, Malaysian choral music from composer Tracy Wong with the Hamilton Children's Choir, and more.





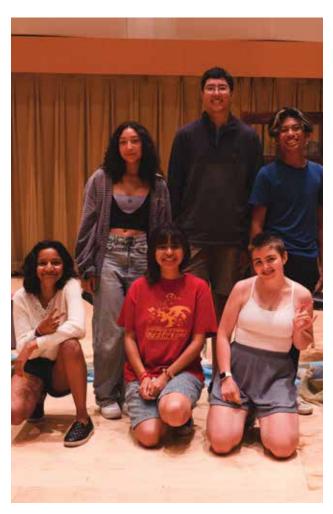


COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS TO INSPIRE AND ENGAGE AUDIENCES

Throughout the year, our Community
Partnerships & Programs team introduces
children and young people to opera through
hands-on activities that explore every
element of an opera, from storytelling and
composition, to performance and design.
Working with COC Teaching Artists,
participants share the stories of their own
communities through music; learn about
careers and opportunities in the performing
arts; and get a behind-the-scenes look at how
an opera is created and staged.

This year, we partnered with organizations including St. James Town Community Arts, Alexander Mackenzie High School, DANI

(Developing and Nurturing Independence), Montgomery's Inn, Nelson High School, Claude Watson Secondary Arts Program, Enquiring Minds Montessori, and SISTEMA Toronto to provide music programming to more than 341 young people. Programs include Opera Makers, a collaborative program adapted to meet the needs of each organization; Classroom Creatives and Creative Intensive, which guides participants through specific knowledge of music creation; and Youth Opera Lab, an interactive stage direction workshop let by COC Opera Teaching Artist and Assistant Director of Gianni Schicchi, Anna Theodosakis.









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, 2022 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		2022	2021
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$	3,187	\$ 1,780
Accounts receivable		3,534	3,163
Other		691	377
	-	7,412	5,320
Accounts Receivable,		25	25
Investments, fair value		3,775	3,630
Capital assets, net		118,074	120,955
Other		495	340
	\$	129,781	\$ 130,270

Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 3,646	\$ 2,622
Due to Canadian Opera Foundation	721	1,504
Deferred revenue	6,253	3,703
	10,620	7,829
Deferred capital contributions	89,391	92,837
Internally restricted net assets	6	7
Operating net assets	29,764	29,597
	\$ 129,781	\$ 130,270

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS

For the years ended June 30 (in thousands)

Revenue	_	2022	2021
Fundraising	\$	9,627	\$ 6,982
Bar, event, parking, and rental		7,358	2,761
Box Office, tours, and concerts		2,839	11
Government grants		6,937	6,443
Contributions from Canadian Opera Foundation		1,650	1,450
Other		1,031	419
Amortization of deferred capital contributions			
Four Seasons Centre		3,401	3,401
Other capital assets		355	296
COVID-19 Government subsidies and insurance proceeds		1,886	3,439
Total Revenue	\$	35,084	\$ 25,202
_			
Expenses			
Production	\$	11,674	\$ 5,957
General and administrative		4,868	4,674
Bar, event, and parking		4,234	843
Facilities		4,077	3,248
Advancement		1,723	1,733
Communications		2,060	1,095
Other		953	786
Ensemble Studio Program		611	642
Education		185	188
Depreciation of capital assets			
Four Seasons Centre		3,401	3,401
Other capital assets		582	463
Grants to Canadian Opera Foundation		550	1,150
Total expenses		34,918	24,180
Excess of revenues over expenses for the year		166	1,022
Transfer from internally restricted net assets		1	28
Net change in operating net assets		1	28
Operating net assets, beginning of year		29,597	28,547
Net assets, end of year	\$	29,764	\$ 29,597
	_		

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, 2021, totalled approximately \$48,937,000. The following sets out the statements of financial position, as well as of revenue and expenses, for 2021 and 2020.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at December 31 (in thousands)

Assets	 2021	2020
Miscellaneous receivables	\$ 25	\$ 114
Investments	49,004	41,120
	\$ 49,029	\$ 41,234
Liabilities and Fund Balances		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 92	\$ 79
Fund balances	 48,937	41,155
	\$ 49 029	41 234

STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENSE, AND FUND BALANCES

As at December 31 (in thousands)

Revenue		2021	2020
Investment income	\$	8,283	\$ 536
Donations and bequests		1,500	12
	\$	9,783	\$ 548
Expenses			
Investment and counsel fees and services	\$	309	\$ 260
Administration		16	14
	_	325	274
Net revenue before grants	_	9,458	274
Grants to Canadian Opera Company and individuals		1,676	1,476
Excess/(deficiency) of revenue over expenses		7,782	(1,202)
Fund balances beginning of year		41,155	42,357
Fund balances, end of year	\$	48,937	\$ 41,155

COC BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021/2022

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GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The Canadian Opera Company gratefully acknowledges the generous support through operating grants from these government agencies and departments:

OPERATING SUPPORT

ENSEMBLE STUDIO AND ENDOWMENT SUPPORT









SPECIAL PROJECT FUNDING

For many programs and special initiatives undertaken each year by the Canadian Opera Company, we gratefully acknowledge project funding from:

Department of Canadian Heritage

Employment and Social Development Canada

Ontario Arts Council



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/2122AnnualReport or scan here:



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