



CANADIAN
OPERA
COMPANY

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FANTASMA

PROGRAM
MARCH 2022





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before watching *Fantasma*, we invite you to experience the Canadian Opera Company's 2022 land acknowledgement ***where the water meets the land*** by viewing the installation in the lobby or by watching [this video](#).

This artwork was created by Rebecca Cuddy and Julie McIsaac, as inaugural participants in the COC's new **Land Acknowledgement Commissioning Program**.

Visit coc.ca/land-acknowledgement for more information.

Detail from ***where the water meets the land*** by Rebecca Cuddy and Julie McIsaac



WELCOME TO THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY THEATRE

Welcome to the world premiere performances of a brand new opera: the COC-commissioned *Fantasma*, by Ian Cusson and Colleen Murphy.

And welcome to the Canadian Opera Company Theatre (COCT), part of a set of interconnected buildings at the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre that houses our administrative offices, rehearsal facilities, and many elements of our production and creative work, including wig and costume shops, and the props department. During the pandemic shutdown, we took the opportunity to refurbish our exterior signage and are now re-activating the COCT as a venue for bold and boundary-breaking work.

This is part of our commitment to opera of all scales, a key element in General Director Perryn Leech's plans for the creative revitalization at the COC. The COCT space is unique in downtown Toronto—it regularly houses two full-sized opera sets during rehearsals—and is characterized by flexibility that can accommodate a wide variety of production needs.

What this means is we now have a dedicated theatrical space for the presentation of works situated beyond, but in complement to, our core season programming. We are excited about sharing work here that is often new, contemporary, and original, and which opens up space for new voices, those unheard or traditionally underrepresented in the opera canon.

After two long years, the moment we've looked forward to is nearly here. All of us at the COC are overjoyed to be back at work doing what we love: creating live opera that showcases the incredible artistic talent in this community and connects audiences to art.

FANTASMA

MUSIC BY IAN CUSSON
LIBRETTO BY COLLEEN MURPHY

WORLD PREMIERE

MARCH 9, 10, 12, 2022
SUNG IN ENGLISH

THE CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

(in order of vocal appearance)

Emile
Owen McCausland[^]

Ms. Palladino
Simona Genga[^]

Léa
Jamie Groote⁺

Ivy
Midori Marsh⁺

Tino, *a clown*
Vartan Gabrielian⁺

Manon
Charlotte Siegel⁺

John/Fantasma
Jonah Spungin⁺

Noah/Bleeding Zombie
Alex Halliday⁺

Marcel
Austin Buckley^{*} (*March 9*)
Olivia Pady^{*} (*March 10*)
Ari Shparber^{*} (*March 12*)

Director/Dramaturg
Julie McIsaac

Music Director/
Orchestral Pianist
Frances Thielmann⁺

Character Pianist/Dante
Vladimir Soloviev⁺

Set & Costume Designer
Camellia Koo

Lighting Designer
Mikael Kangas

Design Coordinator
Jung-Hye Kim[°]

Stage Manager
Kate Porter

Performance time is approximately 45 minutes with no intermission.

[°]COC mainstage debut ⁺Current member of COC Ensemble Studio

[^]Graduate of COC Ensemble Studio ^{*}CCOC member

Program information is correct at time of printing. All casting is subject to change.

GO SCENT FREE.

In consideration of patrons with allergies, please
avoid using scented products and fragrances.

NOTE FROM THE CREATORS

Creation is memory and imagination made visible. Made audible.

As we create, we consider the delicious and agonizing complexity of being human, where comedy and tragedy are forever entwined. Since the commissioning of *Fantasma* in the 2018/2019 season, we have been asking ourselves what it is we carry within us. From the beginning, we were drawn to stories of lost children, of neglected children everywhere who are not heard, who are not heeded, who are considered less worthy, less human because they are not adults. We spent time talking about fear, particularly the fears of young people. Ian's father, who is French-Canadian and grew up in the same community as Julie's mother, shared a story with him about his years as a young person in school, and about the fears the students had of that place, in particular the dark corners of the school's basement. That kernel of an idea grew and developed, becoming the inspiration for Marcel's story.

Over time, our conversations about fear led us to its counterpoint, courage. We wanted to create characters who would help each other to become brave enough to endure and discover what is possible on the other side of such fear. We wanted to explore the empathy and conviction that can emerge once we move beyond the terror of the unexplainable.

Three seasons ago, the idea was to create a compact, one-act opera for young people to attend with their educators and caregivers. Many months and one global pandemic later, we are thrilled to share *Fantasma* not only with younger audiences, but with seasoned opera-goers and the general public, too. A digital experience is being created for students and teachers who cannot attend in-person, and our hearts are full knowing that audiences are returning to live opera. Thank you for being here today, and for supporting new opera.

We have had many partners in creating this work—designers and production team members, all the incredible staff and artists at the COC, young people and educators who participated in focus groups and early workshops of the piece—and now there's you, the audience, the final, most essential ingredient of a new opera. We are delighted to offer you *Fantasma*.

With affection and respect,
Ian, Colleen, and Julie

SYNOPSIS

When best friends Léa and Ivy go to Palladino's old-fashioned carnival, they meet Emile, a barker who urges them to 'Step right up!'

But the carnival is deserted except for a sad Clown, a guy dressed as a Bleeding Zombie, someone in a white sheet called *Fantasma*, and the boss, Ms. Palladino. Bored, Léa and Ivy wander off to a ride.

Meanwhile, Emile makes a plan to increase business: *Fantasma* will pop up in unexpected places and freak people out—that way folks will think there's a real ghost in the carnival and come check it out. But when *Fantasma* scares Ivy, she runs and hides in the Haunted Manor... where things begin to get serious.

The girls meet Marcel, a real, living, breathing ghost whose dark secret shocks them. Do they stick around and try to help him? And what will happen if they tell the adults the truth?

If you would like more information about what you will encounter in *Fantasma*, a Content Note is available at coc.ca/Fantasma.

BIOGRAPHIES

^D COC mainstage debut

[†] Current member of the COC Ensemble Studio

[^] Graduate of COC Ensemble Studio



IAN CUSSON, Composer (Oakville, ON)

COC CREDITS: "In Winter" (2021); "Dodo mon tout petit" for *Louis Riel* (COC and National Arts Centre co-commission, 2019). RECENT: *Indians on Vacation* (Edmonton Opera); *Namwayut* (Calgary Opera). UPCOMING: *Songs From the House of Death* (Vancouver Symphony, Victoria Symphony); *Of the Sea* (Tapestry Opera, Obsidian Theatre). ADDITIONAL CREDITS: COC's Composer-in-Residence (2019-2021); Opera in the 21st Century (Co-artistic Director)



VARTAN GABRIELIAN[†], Tonio (Bass-baritone; Toronto, ON)

SELECT COC CREDITS: Soloist, *In Winter*; Soloist, Mozart's *Requiem*; Betto di Signa, *Gianni Schicchi* (2021); Sergeant, *The Barber of Seville* (2020); Hunter, *Rusalka* (2019). RECENT: Yama, God of Death, *Sāvitrī* (Against the Grain Theatre); Sparafucile, *Rigoletto* (Opéra de Montréal, New Jersey State Opera); Sweeney Todd, *Sweeney Todd*; Leporello/Commendatore, *Don Giovanni* (Opera Philadelphia, Curtis Opera Theater); Prince Gremin, *Eugene Onegin* (Curtis Opera Theatre). UPCOMING: Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Trentino Music Festival)



SIMONA GENGA[^], Ms. Palladino (Mezzo-soprano; Vaughan, ON)

COC CREDITS: Berta, *The Barber of Seville*; Gertrude, *Hansel & Gretel* (Opera for Young Audiences), (2020); Second Maid, *Elektra* (2019); Cindy, *WOW Factor: A Cinderella Story* (Opera for Young Audiences, 2018). RECENT CREDITS: Annina, *La Traviata* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis); Nettie Fowler, *Carousel* (Chautauqua Voice Festival); Sister Helen, *Dead Man Walking* (Opera NUOVA); La Sciaurata, *Prima Zombie* (UofT Opera). UPCOMING CREDITS: Carmen, *Carmen* (Saskatoon Opera)



JAMIE GROOTE[†], Léa (Soprano; Etobicoke, ON)

SELECT COC CREDITS: Kate Pinkerton, *Madama Butterfly* (2022); Soloist, *In Winter*; La Ciesca, *Gianni Schicchi* (2021); Second Wood Nymph, *Rusalka* (2019); Hansel, *Hansel & Gretel* (Opera for Young Audiences, 2020). RECENT: Page, *Rigoletto* (Opera Theatre of St. Louis); Donna Elvira, *Don Giovanni* (UofT Opera); Composer, *Ariadne auf Naxos*; Fox, *The Cunning Little Vixen* (WLU Opera). UPCOMING: First Lady, *The Magic Flute*; Flora Bervoix, *La Traviata* (COC)



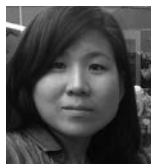
ALEX HALLIDAY[†], Noah/Bleeding Zombie (Bass-baritone; Toronto, ON)

COC CREDITS: Soloist, *In Winter*; Guccio, *Gianni Schicchi* (2021). RECENT: Figaro, *The Marriage of Figaro*; Sir Thomas Bertram, *Mansfield Park*; Colonel Denison/Samuel Miller, *Maid & Master: The Massey Murder*; Nardo, *La finta giardiniera*; Inspector Brinks, *Who Killed Adrianna?*; Carl Olsen, *Street Scene*; Alexander Throttlebottom, *Of Thee I Sing*; Masetto, *Don Giovanni* (UofT Opera); Father, *Silent Light* (Banff Centre)



MIKAEL KANGAS, Lighting Designer (Toronto, ON)

COC CREDITS: (as Assistant Lighting Designer) *Gianni Schicchi* (2021); *Hansel & Gretel* (2020); *Rusalka*, *Così fan tutte* (2019); *Eugene Onegin*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (2018); *The Elixir of Love* (2017). RECENT: *Trouble in Mind*, *Glass Menagerie*, *O'Flaherty VC* (Shaw Festival); *Newsies*, *Crazy for You* (Sheridan College); *Cabaret*, *City of Angels*, *Little Night Music* (Randolph College). UPCOMING: *Damn Yankees* (Shaw Festival Theatre). ADDITIONAL CREDITS: Member of the Associated Designers of Canada



JUNG-HYE KIM^D, Design Co-Ordinator (Toronto, ON)

COC DEBUT. RECENT: (as Set and Costume Designer) *Hilot Means Healer* (Cahoots Theatre/b current); *Dry Powder* (Evermore Theatre Company); *Now You See Her* (Nightwood Theatre, Quote Unquote Collective, Why Not Theatre); *Das Ding* (Theatre Smash); *Durango* (Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, fu-GEN Asian Canadian Theatre Company, Theatre Smash); *Small Axe* (Project: Humanity, The Theatre Centre). UPCOMING: *Hamlet 911* (Stratford Festival)

THE QUEEN IN ME

CREATED AND PERFORMED BY
TEIYA KASAHARA

笠原 貞野

BUY
TICKETS



Our second production at the newly revitalized COCT is a new co-production by the Canadian Opera Company, Amplified Opera, Nightwood Theatre, and Theatre Gargantua.

Featuring music from *La Bohème*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Macbeth*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Rigoletto*, *Salome*, and *The Magic Flute*, *The Queen In Me* is an exuberant show by interdisciplinary artist TEIYA KASAHARA 笠原 貞野 (they/them).

It explores the many ways that race, gender, and sexuality are policed in the opera industry, combining comedy, drama, and plenty of opera.

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**CAMELLIA KOO**, Set & Costume Designer (Toronto, ON)

COC CREDITS: *Carmen* (2016); *The Magic Victrola*, *Second Nature*, *Operation Superhero*, *Bremen Town Musicians* (Opera For Young Audiences, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014). RECENT: *Turandot* (Helikon Opera); *August: Osage County* (Soulpepper Theatre Company); *La Bohème* (Santa Fe Opera); *Henry V*, *Middletown*, *The Lady From the Sea*, *The Stepmother* (Shaw Festival); *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Edmonton Opera); *The Lighthouse* (Boston Lyric Opera)

**MIDORI MARSH**[†], Ivy (Soprano; Cleveland, OH, USA)

COC CREDITS: Soloist, *In Winter*; Soloist, Mozart's *Requiem*; Nella, *Gianni Schicchi* (2021) RECENT: Mary Crawford, *Mansfield Park*; Susanna, *The Marriage of Figaro*; Cecilia Corfield, *Maid & Master: The Massey Opera*; Arminda, *La finta giardiniera*; Rose Maurrant, *Street Scene* (UofT Opera); Sarah Thorpe, *No One's Safe*; Johan's Mother, *Silent Light* (Banff Centre); Frasquita, *Carmen* (Waterloo Symphony); Annina, *La Traviata* (Cambridge Symphony Orchestra); Zerlina, *Don Giovanni* (Portland Summer Opera Workshop). UPCOMING: Papagena, *The Magic Flute*; Annina, *La Traviata* (COC)

**OWEN McCAUSLAND**[^], Emile (Tenor; Saint John, NB)

SELECT COC CREDITS: Rodrigo, *Otello*; A Young Servant, *Elektra* (2019); The Fisherman, *The Nightingale*; Pedrillo, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* (2018); Tamino, *The Magic Flute* (2017); Lurcanio, *Ariodante* (2016); Testo, *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (2015). RECENT: Don Ottavio, *Don Giovanni* (Manitoba Opera); Jacquinio, *Fidelio* (Pacific Opera Victoria); Chaakapesh, *The Trickster's Quest* (Orchestre symphonique de Montreal). UPCOMING: Don Ottavio, *Don Giovanni* (Pacific Opera Victoria); Rodrigo, *Otello* (Cleveland Orchestra)

**JULIE McISAAC**, Director/Dramaturg (Victoria, BC)

COC CREDITS: (as Dramaturg) *Voices of Mountains* (2022); (as Assistant Director) *Hansel & Gretel* (2020). RECENT: (as Director) *Beauty's Beast* (East Van Opera); *Poly Queer Love Ballad* (Theatre Passe Muraille); (as Assistant Director) *Silent Light* (Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity). UPCOMING: (as Co-Screenwriter and Executive Producer) *Les Filles du Roi* (Urban Ink Productions); (as Dramaturg) *Wilt Thou Go* (Shot of Scotch); (as Assistant Director) *Death in Venice* (Pacific Opera). ADDITIONAL CREDITS: COC Director/Dramaturg-in-Residence (2019-2020); Co-host, *Key Change: A COC Podcast*; Lead Curator, *Opera Everywhere* (2020-2021)

**COLLEEN MURPHY**[°], Librettist (Rouyn-Noranda, QC)

COC DEBUT. RECENT: *Oksana G.* (Tapestry Opera); *My Mouth on Your Heart* (Arts and Letters Club); *The Society For The Destitute Presents Titus Bouffonius* (Rumble Theatre); *The Breathing Hole* (Stratford Festival); *Pig Girl* (Theatre Network); *Armstrong's War* (Arts Club Theatre); *The Goodnight Bird* (Finborough Theatre); *The December Man / L'homme de décembre* (Alberta Theatre Projects, Enbridge Festival of New Canadian Plays). UPCOMING: *The Breathing Hole* (National Arts Centre)

**KATE PORTER**, Stage Manager (Toronto, ON)

COC CREDITS: *Turandot*, *La Bohème* (2019); *WOW Factor: A Cinderella Story* (Opera for Young Audiences, 2018); *The Magic Victrola* (Opera for Young Audiences); *Götterdämmerung*, *The Elixir of Love* (2017); 16 productions as Assistant Stage Manager (2005-2020). RECENT: *The Overcoat: A Musical Tailoring* (Canadian Stage, Tapestry Opera, Vancouver Opera); *Dead Man Walking*, *Rigoletto*, *Carmen* (Vancouver Opera)

**CHARLOTTE SIEGEL**[†], Manon (Soprano; Toronto, ON)

COC CREDITS: Soloist, *In Winter* (2021). RECENT: Soloist, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Koerner Hall); Soloist, *40 Days of Opera* (Pacific Opera Victoria); Rose Maurrant, *Street Scene*; Elle, *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*; Nancy, *Albert Herring*; Mother Marie, *Dialogues des Carmélites* (Opera McGill); Micaëla, *Carmen* (Summer Opera Lyric Theatre). UPCOMING: Second Lady, *The Magic Flute* (COC). ADDITIONAL CREDITS: Former Civic Engagement Quartet Young Artist (Pacific Opera Victoria)

**VLADIMIR SOLOVIEV**[†], Character Pianist/Dante (Toronto, ON)

COC CREDITS: (as Ensemble Studio Intern Coach) *Gianni Schicchi*, *Madama Butterfly* UPCOMING: (as Ensemble Studio Intern Coach) *The Magic Flute*

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JONAH SPUNGIN[†], John/Fantasma (Baritone; Ottawa, ON)

COC CREDITS: Soloist, *In Winter*; Marco, *Gianni Schicchi* (2021). RECENT: Marullo, *Rigoletto*; Mike Groom, *Everest*; King Melchior, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*; Paris, *Roméo et Juliette* (Calgary Opera); Eisenstein, *Die Fledermaus*; Gideon March, *Little Women* (Opera McGill); Baron Mirko Zeta, *The Merry Widow*; Captain Corcoran, *HMS Pinafore* (McGill Savoy Society); Ludovic Athenodorus, *Ghost Opera* (Calgary Opera, The Old Trout Puppet Workshop). UPCOMING: Jan Nyman, *Breaking the Waves* (Vadstena Academy)



FRANCES THIELMANN[†], Music Director/Orchestral Pianist (Vancouver, BC)

COC CREDITS: (as Ensemble Studio Intern Coach) *Gianni Schicchi*, *Madama Butterfly*
UPCOMING: (as Ensemble Studio Intern Coach) *Bluebeard's Castle*, *La Traviata*

CANADIAN CHILDREN'S OPERA COMPANY

Katherine Semcesen, *Executive Director*

Teri Dunn, *Music Director*

Members of the Canadian Children's Opera Company appear in all Canadian Opera Company productions requiring children's voices. Founded in 1968, the CCOC is the only permanent children's opera company in Canada, providing musical and dramatic training to hundreds of children and youth aged 4-18. It specializes in the development and production of operatic and choral repertoire performed by children. Auditions can be arranged through the CCOC website: canadianchildrensopera.com

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
Kristin McCollum

UNDERSTUDY
Emile: Matthew Cairns[†]

The Community Partnerships & Programs team would like to acknowledge Music Therapist and registered Psychotherapist Dr. SarahRose Black, and registered Social Service Worker and Masters of Social Work candidate Sarah Johnston for their contributions in the development of the Interactive Resource Guide.

Click [this link](#) to view our Interactive Resource Guide, designed to guide educators and students through activities and discussions that explore opera creation, process socio-emotional themes, and provide digital opportunities to explore vocational points of access within the performing arts.

STANDING OVATION

A CAMPAIGN TO CELEBRATE THE RETURN OF LIVE OPERA.

Help welcome our extraordinary artists, technicians, and musicians back to the stage with the standing ovation they deserve.

When you make a gift to this campaign by May 21, 2022, your contribution will be matched, dollar for dollar, by an anonymous donor to double the impact of your generosity.

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Daniele Guevara



The COC's Community Partnerships & Programs team is excited to offer a number of creative programs that connect children, youth, and young adults with meaningful experiential learning and professional development opportunities this summer.

COC SUMMER **OPERA** CAMPS

Summer Opera Camps invite young creatives entering grades one through 12 to learn about singing, composition, drama, and set design, through the making of an original opera. Our one-week programs culminate in a final showcase held on the last day for family and friends. No previous experience with opera is required to participate.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

COC SUMMER **OPERA** INTENSIVE

Brand new for August 2022, the COC is excited to introduce the Summer Opera Intensive. This one-week program is designed to provide a framework for advanced artists who are interested in exploring a professional singing career.

The goal of the COC Summer Opera Intensive is to seek and support emerging Canadian talent by providing artists with a barrier-free opportunity to learn about the multi-faceted career of professional singing. Successful candidates must audition via video-recording in order to apply. This program will be tuition-free for the 10 selected participants.

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

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Director, Ensemble Studio
Dorian Cox

ENSEMBLE STUDIO

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