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CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY ANNOUNCES CANCELLATION OF ALL IN-PERSON PROGRAMMING FOR FALL 2020

***Parsifal* will be rescheduled for the fall of COC's 2022/2023 season**

Toronto – Given continued restrictions on large public gatherings in Toronto due to ongoing precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the **Canadian Opera Company** will be cancelling all in-person performances, programming, and events through the fall of its 2020/2021 season.

“Since the cancellation of our spring season back in March, we have been actively exploring every option regarding what our return to the stage might look like in our current reality,” says **COC General Director Alexander Neef**.

“There was much to consider,” **Neef** continues. “Opera gathers talent from all around the world to work together in close quarters, requires an extensive rehearsal schedule, plenty of advance planning, and – to remain economically viable – an auditorium full of people, without whom no live performance is complete. Taking all of these factors into account, plus the many unknowns around public health guidelines in the fall, this was the only viable course of action to ensure the continued safety of our artists, staff, and audiences.”

The remainder of the COC's 2020/2021 season is scheduled to proceed as planned with Bizet's *Carmen*, Janáček's *Katya Kabanova*, Verdi's *La Traviata*, and Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

The **COC Ensemble Studio** will continue developing the country's top young opera artists and working remotely as required. Over the past months, COC trainers have used digital resources to deliver vocal, diction, language, dramatic, and performance kinetics coaching amongst others. Both incoming and returning members will also continue to receive mentorship, career guidance, and remotely-filmed performance opportunities until live performance is once again deemed safe.

Parsifal Rescheduled for Fall 2022

This fall was to mark a major milestone for the **Canadian Opera Company** with the company set to stage its first-ever production of Wagner's epic *Parsifal*. However, the COC confirms that the opera has been rescheduled to the fall of 2022.

“I realize that *Parsifal*'s cancellation for this season will initially come as a disappointment to many,” says **COC General Director Alexander Neef**. “This production caps a decade-long, community-led effort to stage Wagner's final work here, and we are so thankful for the ongoing support of our donors. The passion and commitment of our Monumental Campaign supporters has ensured that we can bring *Parsifal* to our stage, and it is thanks to them that we can still share this magnificent opera with Canadian audiences in the near future.”

Full List of Affected Programming and Events

Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* and Wolfgang A. Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*

The mainstage productions, slated to run from September 25 – November 7, 2020, will not be performed as part of the COC's 2020/2021 fall season.

Opera for Young Audiences: *Fantasma*

The world premiere of the recently commissioned production, composed by COC Composer-in-Residence Ian Cusson with libretto by Colleen Murphy and directed by COC Director/Dramaturg-in-Residence Julie McIsaac, will be rescheduled from December 2-6, 2020 to later dates in the spring of 2021.

Ensemble Studio Competition and Centre Stage Gala

The annual vocal competition and signature fundraiser will not take place as planned on November 4, 2020. Further details will be announced at a later date.

The Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre

The company's popular performance showcase will not take place while physical distancing measures are in effect. Instead, work is underway to ensure that the music continues in a digital format.

Education & Outreach

All in-person programming dedicated to children, youth, and families will be paused until further notice. In the immediate, the company will continue to create educational materials, webinars, and interactive programming in a digital format.

Ticketing Options

A number of flexible ticketing solutions have been created for affected ticket-holders. Options range from tax receipts issued for ticket donation, converting ticket value to gift certificate credit that never expires, or full refund; complete details are listed at coc.ca/FallTickets.

This past spring, more than 2,100 patrons chose to donate the face value of their tickets back to the **Canadian Opera Company** in an overwhelming show of support for the company and for Canadian opera.

Both the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts and the company's administrative office at 227 Front St. E. remain closed to the public until further notice, with full-time staff continuing to work off-site. The **COC Box Office** is currently operating remotely, Mondays through Fridays, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Further ticketing inquiries can be directed to tickets@coc.ca or by phone at 416-363-8231.

Embracing a Digital Future

In the wake of the company's spring cancellations due to COVID-19, the COC has taken its programming online, resulting in the creation of a **Digital Content Hub** found at coc.ca/Hub. The online portal houses all of the COC's digital initiatives, including: the **Virtual Choir**, a video chorus that received hundreds of submissions from all over the globe; **Songs of Hope**, an intimate online concert from the **COC Ensemble Studio** slated to premiere online on July 9, 2020; and **Opera Makers**, a series of bite-sized video tutorials for young people.

The COC is committed to continued innovation and exploring more opportunities for audiences to engage with the art form. Later this summer the company will invite subscribers, members, and other patrons to participate in a survey about what they have enjoyed online and what they would most like to see next.

A public virtual roundtable is also scheduled for **July 6 at 7 p.m.** where **COC General Director Alexander Neef** will discuss plans for the months ahead and answer questions from participants. Further details will be posted to **coc.ca** as they are confirmed.

ABOUT THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

Based in Toronto, the Canadian Opera Company is the largest producer of opera in Canada and one of the largest in North America. The COC enjoys a loyal audience including a dedicated base of subscribers. Under its leadership team of General Director Alexander Neef and Music Director Johannes Debus, the company has an international reputation for artistic excellence and creative innovation. Its diverse repertoire includes new commissions and productions, local and international collaborations with leading opera companies and festivals, and attracts the world's foremost Canadian and international artists. The COC Academy is an incubator for the future of the art form, nurturing Canada's new wave of opera creators with customized training and support. The COC performs in its own opera house, the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, hailed internationally as one of the finest in the world. For more information, visit coc.ca.

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