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CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY UNVEILS REIMAGINED FALL SEASON WITH “OPERA EVERYWHERE”

New lineup features virtual performances, interactive learning opportunities, and community-rooted partnerships

Toronto - The **Canadian Opera Company** is gearing up for a reimagined fall season of physically distanced programming, called **Opera Everywhere**. This new slate of digital and in-person events includes live concerts, interactive learning opportunities, and deep dives into opera’s past and future, all designed with community-building in mind.

“As we look beyond our traditional programming, we envision a new cultural reality where opera is everywhere and the stage is for everyone,” says **COC General Director Alexander Neef**. “This fall, we are deepening our commitment to the communities around us and providing traditionally underrepresented artists with priority access to our new digital platforms in order to better share and amplify their voices.”

“This is a transformative moment for the performing arts,” adds **Neef**. “Digital innovation is connecting us with audiences around the world – and this innovation is here to stay, long after our return to usual programming.”

The COC’s fall programs can largely be experienced from anywhere in the world and were shaped using feedback from an extensive audience survey.

“This summer, we asked our audiences how they’d like to engage with the art form and with us,” says **Christie Darville, COC Deputy General Director and Executive Director of Philanthropy and Audiences**. “We were thrilled by the response and encouraged that so many people want to explore and experience opera - whether they are completely new to the genre or know every classic aria by heart.”

The COC’s new offerings are rooted in three programming pillars:

From the Opera House features the best in music through new concerts, all staged at the **Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts**. As with traditional COC programming, these events are meant to reconnect audiences with the experience and emotion of live performance and are available for a limited time.

COC in Conversation provides opportunities for knowledge-exchange through panels, a new podcast, and lecture-recitals that explore the past, present, and future of opera. Diverse speakers invite audiences into opera’s most fascinating and pressing questions, with new audio options for “screen-free” participation.

Opera for Toronto curates initiatives with a strong local focus, showcasing Canadian talent through collaborations with local artists and organizations. Performances and events support the COC’s ongoing mission to serve as an incubator for Canadian creativity and perspectives.

Upcoming programs include:

From the Opera House

Free Concert Series Festival (November 2020)

This fall, the **Free Concert Series in the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre Presented by TD Bank Group** takes on a digital festival format. Based on the much-loved cornerstone of the COC's community programming for more than a decade, the three-day festival will present a wide-ranging lineup of acclaimed artists, representing Toronto's noted cultural and artistic diversity. The festival will also provide insights into the artists' work and performance practice through introductions and interviews.

COC in Conversation

Key Change: A Canadian Opera Company Podcast (Begins October 27, 2020)

The COC is launching a new podcast, with a fresh take on today's opera issues. Co-hosted by classical singer and culture critic **Robyn Grant-Moran** (a member of the COC's Indigenous Circle of Artists) alongside **COC Director/Dramaturg-in-Residence Julie McIsaac**, the first season of bi-weekly episodes explores the operagoing experience from a variety of perspectives, with special guests from the opera field and beyond.

MindBodyMusic (October 2020)

Building on the success of the COC's recent Music and Wellness programming, music therapist **Dr. SarahRose Black** and **COC Music Director Johannes Debus** team up with special guest experts from both the arts and sciences for a panel discussion that explores the relationship between psychology, physiology, and musical experience.

Solo Spotlights with the COC Orchestra (Begins November 2020)

Musicians of the **COC Orchestra** take centre stage in this illuminating video series hosted by **COC Music Director Johannes Debus**. Sharing candid anecdotes, vivid memories, and short musical demonstrations, each episode features Debus in conversation with a different member of the orchestra - professional collaborators who know, first-hand, the pressures and delights of stepping into the musical spotlight when a solo instrument takes prominence in operatic storytelling.

Opera for Toronto

Opera Makers - A New Community Program (Begins September 22, 2020)

The COC's interactive digital series for youth has expanded into a community-based program through a series of local partnerships, beginning with **Sistema Toronto**. Starting September 22, teaching artists from both organizations will collaborate on weekly online workshops for Sistema Toronto students as part of their regular online music education. Sistema is a leading organization that enacts transformative social change by providing free musical and educational opportunities to children in underserved communities.

Opera Makers (Original Digital Series) for Culture Days (September 25 - October 25, 2020)

The COC is proud to participate in this year's diverse slate of Culture Days activities. The company's original eight-part video series, **Opera Makers: Activities for Young Creatives**, will be available for the public to access throughout the entirety of Culture Days at culturedays.ca.

***Songs of Hope: From Our Homes to Yours* for Culture Days (September 25 - 27, 2020)**

For the opening weekend of Culture Days 2020, the COC will share a special digital re-broadcast of ***Songs of Hope: From Our Homes to Yours***. The intimate concert, recorded this past spring and performed by emerging artists of the company's **Ensemble Studio**, features a deeply personal program meant to comfort and uplift, with every song holding a special significance for the artists.

COC x AGO: Hello from the Other Side (January 2021)

2020 has been a rollercoaster year, with the arts industry particularly hard hit. In solidarity, the **Art Gallery of Ontario** is welcoming arts organizations from across the city to perform in its spaces for a live, distanced audience. On select Fridays in January 2021, from 2-4 p.m, the venue will host COC artists for a series that celebrates the rich connection between the visual and musical arts.

Further programming details will be shared in the weeks ahead. For more information, visit coc.ca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Volvo Car Canada: Official Automotive Partner of the Canadian Opera Company and the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts

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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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