

For immediate release: September 10, 2020

OPERA MAKERS, CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY'S DIGITAL SERIES FOR KIDS, EXPANDS ACROSS TORONTO

Program launches this fall with new partnership with Sistema Toronto

Toronto — The **Canadian Opera Company's** interactive digital program for young people, **Opera Makers**, is evolving to help spark a love of opera in even more children across Toronto. Through a series of community partnerships, **Opera Makers** will connect COC teaching artists with local organizations to incorporate opera creation and education into new and existing programs, bringing opera within reach to those who might not otherwise have access.

Opera Makers aims to introduce children to opera through hands-on activities that explore every element of an opera, from storytelling and composition, to performance and design. Participants will create their own operas, rooted in the spirit of co-creation, that tell the stories of their communities through music. Programming will be created by COC teaching artists in collaboration with local partners.

The first of these community programs is a partnership with **Sistema Toronto**, a leading organization that enacts transformative social change by providing musical and intellectual opportunities to children in vulnerable communities for free. Beginning on September 22, 2020, the COC will collaborate with Sistema teaching artists to provide weekly online workshops to **Sistema Toronto** students as part of their regular online music education programming. Students will learn what opera is, what it means to sing classically, and create and compose their own opera.

“With this next phase of our Opera Makers programming, we’re building on the success of our original video series to introduce even more young people to every aspect of opera in fun and imaginative ways,” says **Christie Darville, COC Deputy General Director and Executive Director, Philanthropy & Audiences**. “We’re particularly excited to launch this program through our new partnership with Sistema Toronto, whose inspiring work has enriched young lives around the world through music education.”

“We’re incredibly pleased to announce this partnership with the Canadian Opera Company,” says **Andres Tucci-Clarke, Managing Director of Sistema Toronto**. “Many of our students have attended COC performances in the past and have a basic understanding of opera; however, we’re now able to take this experience a step further by giving our students the chance to learn about all aspects of the opera world in an in-depth way via experiential learning. Furthermore, on top of building music skills we are also a social education program, and this presents a wonderful opportunity for our students to work on self-expression and self-advocacy by sharing the stories of their communities through music. We can’t wait to see this new initiative in action.”

Details of future **Opera Makers** partnerships will be announced in due course. The original **Opera Makers: Activities for Young Creatives**, an eight-week tutorial series launched this past summer, is available at coc.ca/OperaMakers.

For more information about **Opera Makers** and other COC community programming, visit coc.ca/Hub.

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.

ABOUT SISTEMA TORONTO

Social Change Through Music Education: Sistema Toronto provides musical and intellectual opportunities to children in vulnerable communities, with the goal of transformative social change. We build stronger communities by enabling marginalized children to overcome poverty, grow, and thrive as engaged citizens and future leaders. Sistema Toronto is first and foremost a social development program, using ensemble-based music education to transform the lives of at-risk children. Sistema Toronto students work together for 10 hours of weekly instruction. They learn strings (violin, viola, cello, or double bass), percussion, choir and Music & Movement while developing important life skills like problem solving, empathy, and self-advocacy. Find out more at sistema-toronto.ca.

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