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## **CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY'S ENSEMBLE STUDIO WELCOMES TWO EMERGING ARTISTS FOR 2021/2022**



**Toronto** – The **COC Ensemble Studio** welcomes two new artists for the 2021/2022 season: soprano **Charlotte Siegel** and pianist **Vladimir Soloviev**. The two officially join the Ensemble Studio on **August 30, 2021**, becoming part of an innovative development program that has launched the careers of nearly 230 Canadian opera professionals.

“This year, we connected virtually with promising young artists from all across Canada,” says **Roberto Mauro, COC Director of Artistic Planning**. “Despite the challenges of recent circumstances, artistic development remains a top priority for the COC – and a pillar of who we are as a national performing arts organization.”

“Our newest members are incredibly skilled and passionate artists who were drawn to opera,” says **Liz Upchurch, Head of the COC Ensemble Studio**. “Charlotte’s poise is remarkable, with a voice that’s wonderfully connected to her personality, and, as a pianist, Vlad’s musicality and elegance is striking. Over the years, we’ve seen them both grow through auditions, competitions, and self-driven artistic initiatives. The sheer tenacity they apply to perfecting their craft is impressive and their invitation to join this year’s Ensemble Studio is a direct reflection of their extensive preparations.”

**Charlotte Siegel** placed third in the COC’s Ensemble Studio Competition in 2019; she has since completed her master’s in opera and voice at McGill University and was a Buffalo/Toronto District winner for the 2021 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. **Siegel** is the co-founder and Artistic Director of the Marigold Music Program, a collective of young artists working to close the accessibility gap between marginalized youth and music education.

**Vladimir Soloviev** has performed around the world; as a collaborative pianist, he has worked with Classic Lyric Arts Opera Studio, Highlands Opera Studio, UofT Opera School, and the Toronto Summer Music Festival. He's also recently worked as a teaching artist with the COC's Opera Makers community programming and remains actively involved as music director at Trinity United Church in Newmarket, Ontario.

"The live mainstage experience is a unique and foundational element to the Ensemble Studio training program," says **Mauro**. "Although we were able to continue providing remote coaching, career counsel, and mentorship opportunities through the 2020/2021 season, we know how crucial it is to be able to perform and learn alongside established opera professionals; as such, all 20/21 Ensemble members were invited to stay on for the opportunity to gain this unparalleled experience during our 'Season Like No Other.'"

Returning to the COC Ensemble Studio for 2021/2022 are: soprano **Jamie Groote**, soprano **Midori Marsh**, tenor **Matthew Cairns**, baritone **Jonah Spungin**, bass-baritone **Alex Halliday**, bass-baritone **Vartan Gabrielian**, and pianist **Frances Thielmann**.

Soprano **Anna-Sophie Neher** and pianist **Alex Soloway** graduated from the COC Ensemble Studio this past spring. In a testament to the preparation and training received through the program, **Neher's** upcoming engagements include a debut at Opéra national de Paris and appearances on the COC's mainstage while **Soloway** will join the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program for 2021/2022 and was named one of CBC Music's classical "30 Under 30" list for 2021 alongside incoming Ensemble member **Charlotte Siegel**.

Both new and returning Ensemble members will be featured in the COC's upcoming Fall Stage programming, with full details to follow on August 16, 2021.

For more information, visit [coc.ca/Ensemble](https://coc.ca/Ensemble).

## **ABOUT THE NEW MEMBERS**

### **Charlotte Siegel – Soprano**

Soprano and singer/songwriter Charlotte Siegel of Toronto holds a graduate diploma and a master's in opera and voice from McGill University, and a bachelor of classical voice performance from the University of Toronto. Siegel recently made CBC Music's classical "30 Under 30" list for 2021, was a Buffalo/Toronto District winner for the 2021 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, placed third in the Canadian Opera Company's Ensemble Studio Competition in 2019, and was also a finalist for the Atelier Lyrique 2019 National Auditions. Recent roles include Rose Maurant in *Street Scene*, Nancy in *Albert Herring*, and Elle in *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* with Opera McGill. Siegel is the co-founder and Artistic Director of the Marigold Music Program and will be the librettist for Loose Tea Music Theatre's next iteration of *Carmen #YesAllWomen*, scheduled for 2023.

### **Vladimir Soloviev – Pianist**

Vladimir Soloviev is a Toronto-based pianist and vocal coach whose performances around the globe include appearances at Carnegie Hall and Bohemian National Hall in New York. Soloviev has won the Pattison Piano Competition and the London Scholarship Foundation Competition, and the Concerto Competition at Western University. He completed his bachelor's degree at the University of Western Ontario, his master's at the Eastman School of Music, a professional studies diploma at Mannes School of Music, and a Master's in Collaborative Piano at the University of Toronto (UofT). As a collaborative pianist, Soloviev has worked with Classic Lyric Arts Opera Studio, Highlands Opera Studio (HOS), UofT Opera School, and the Toronto Summer Music Festival. He's also performed *Don Giovanni* with HOS, as well as *Portrait de Manon* and *Der Schauspieldirektor* with UofT Opera, and remains active as a music director at Trinity United Church in Newmarket, Ontario.

## **ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE STUDIO**

Ensemble Studio members receive a unique blend of advanced training and practical career experience. The highly tailored, multi-year program involves understudying and performing mainstage roles, intensive vocal coaching, as

well as detailed language, movement, and acting studies. Participants attend intimate masterclasses and lessons with renowned opera professionals, and are also provided with holistic training that includes industry-specific business skills as well as financial and career counselling.

Together with the COC Orchestra Academy, Company-in-Residence, Composer-in-Residence, Director/Dramaturg-in-Residence, and the company's newest Disruptor-in-Residence program, the Ensemble Studio is part of the COC Academy, a first-of-its-kind, comprehensive post-graduate training unit for opera professionals in Canada. The COC Academy aims to foster a vibrant community of Canadian artists and creative professionals—from singers to instrumentalists to administrators—and provide participants with the skills, experiences, and resources to thrive in a global opera environment.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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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. General Director Perryn Leech joined the company in 2021, forming a leadership team with Music Director Johannes Debus and Deputy General Director Christie Darville. The COC enjoys a loyal audience, including a dedicated base of subscribers, and 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](http://coc.ca).

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