

Toronto
City
Opera



THE TENDER LAND

Aaron Copland

June 18, 21, 22, 2025

AL GREEN THEATRE

750 SPADINA AVE. TORONTO

www.torontocityopera.com

Land Acknowledgement

As artists who work in opera, we are telling stories that reflect and shape our place in the world. In doing so, we have a responsibility to recognize the history of the land on which we create our art.

We wish to acknowledge that the land on which Toronto City Opera operates has over thousands of years been the traditional land of the the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

THE TENDER LAND

By Aaron Copland

- Runtime: 2 hours including a 20 minute intermission
- Libretto by Horace Everett
- By arrangement with B&H Music Publishing Inc. dba Boosey & Hawkes, publisher and copyright owner.

Cast and Creative Team

CONDUCTOR	JENNIFER TUNG	LAURIE MOSS	EMILY ROCHA*
PIANIST	IVAN ESTEY JOVANOVIC	MARTIN	DAVID WALSH*
DIRECTOR	MABEL WONNACOTT	SPONSORED BY WINDRUSH ESTATE WINERY	
LIGHTING & PROJECTION DESIGNER	NATHAN BRUCE	TOP	BEN WALLACE
COSTUME DESIGNER	ALEXANDRA CHRISTOFIDES	SPONSORED BY WINDRUSH ESTATE WINERY	
CHOREOGRAPHER	ALLISON GRANT	MA MOSS	JENNIFER ROUTHIER*
STAGE MANAGER	STEPHANIE SEDLBAUER	BETH MOSS	DANIELA CARREON HERRERA
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	CLAIRE THORNTON	GRANDPA MOSS	MATTHEW BLACK
SET CONSTRUCTION	GABRIEL GRAZIANO	MR. SPLINTERS	ALVARO VAZQUEZ
SCENIC ARTIST & PROPS BUILDER	EMILY NEUFELD	MRS. SPLINTERS	MARIA MILENIC
PROPS & FURNITURE	UoFT OPERA	MR. JENKS	JAMES COOLE-STEVENSON
SOUND DESIGNER	JOSEPH PEPELNAK	MRS. JENKS	VIVIEN ILLION
SUPERTITLES OPERATOR	CATHARIN CAREW	LAURIE (COVER)	NOELLE SLANEY
VIDEO OPERATOR	NICOLE EUN-JU BELL	*APPEARING WITH THE PERMISSION OF CANADIAN ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION	
DANCE CAPTAIN	ALICE MACGREGOR		

Toronto City Opera Chorus

SOPRANOS	ALICE MACGREGOR CHERYL LAKE GABRYSLA KOWALIK KAREN ZOU KATHY WERT LINDA GRUSON	MARISA OLIVEIRA MEGAN CARNEY NADA SAVICEVIC RACHEL GOTTESMAN SANDRA TANG SHERILY DE SILVA SUSY CIMICATA TANYA SZYDLOWSKI VIVIEN MANN YANG-HAI WANG	MEZZO- SOPRANOS	BEV CHURCH BEVERLY GIBSON BREE HORTON CAROL HOUSTON GRACE NOSTBAKKEN HEATHER MCGRATH IONA GREENHAM JUDITH SHAVER LIS SODERBERG SINDY MITCHELL VANESSA QUINN
TENORS	CHRIS LEA CHRIS SCHACK HARSHMAAN SINGH WILL LIN	BASSES	DEREK GRUNDLE DON MAUDSLEY DOUG HOUSEHOLDER EVERLY GIANNI MINARDI HENRY TANG	

Synopsis



1930s Midwest – The Great Depression in the Dustbowl: The story centres around Laurie Moss, a young woman living on a farm with her mother, sister, and grandfather. As Laurie prepares to graduate high school—a rare achievement in her community—she begins to dream of a life beyond the boundaries of her small, sheltered world. Laurie’s mother receives some gossip that a young girl in the neighbouring town was assaulted by two unknown men, believed to be vagabonds passing through town. When two drifters, Martin and Top, arrive at the farm looking for work, Laurie finds herself drawn to Martin. At her graduation party, Laurie and Martin fall in love quickly, and they begin to imagine a future of freedom and adventure. However, fear and suspicion from her family, and the harsh realities of transient life lead Martin to face some tough choices. In the end, Laurie must decide if she will stay with her family on the farm or follow her dreams on her own terms.

Eco Friendly!

- The Moss Family front porch set you see on the stage is made from reclaimed and recycled construction lumber! Big thanks to Gabriel Graziano and Summerhill Homes for their support!
- Opera is a team effort – we are grateful for the support of UofT Opera and their props department to re-use set elements from their productions! Sharing production elements among local groups is a great way for theatrical productions to lessen our impact on the environment.

Director's Notes

In 1952, Aaron Copland was commissioned to write an opera to be televised on NBC's Television Opera Workshop. This was to be Copland's first full-length opera. The composer was searching for a story that would suit TV audiences when he discovered *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. This book by American writer James Agee and photographer Walker Evans is a photojournalistic account of the harsh realities of daily life for tenant farmers and their families during the Dust Bowl. Agee writes about the cyclical nature of the lives of these people: how most are born, will work, and will die on this land and how their children's lives will echo this experience for generations to come.

"On the day you are married [...] a key is turned, with a sound not easily audible, and you are locked between the stale earth and the sky; the key turns in the lock behind you, and your full life's work begins, and there is nothing conceivable for which you can afford to stop short of your death, which is a long way off."

Although *The Tender Land* is not directly based on the families discussed in Agee's book, Copland's opera beautifully captures the hardships of daily life and the complex family and social relationships which accompany them. Copland's female characters are complex and flawed, and at its core, *The Tender Land* is a coming of age story with a feminist edge. We meet Laurie on the day of her graduation party. The first of her family to complete high school, Laurie is already breaking generational cycles. But with the weight of traditional gender roles pressing in on her, it is difficult to imagine a life beyond her small community. Laurie's decisions throughout the opera challenge the expectations of those around her and ultimately lead her to a life beyond prescribed societal roles.



While reading Agee's book, I was taken by his intricate descriptions of textiles, clothing, and quilts and how they indicated social status and belonging. Rural midwestern communities consisted of tightly knit groups of relatives and close friends whose livelihood was often directly linked to the land on which they all lived; a community of people, quilted together to make a whole. Top and Martin, our wayward travellers, wear clothes patched with bits of quilts in all different colours which indicates their multitude of experiences and that they have not assimilated to any one community. While the chorus and most of the principles are dressed in earth tones which reflect their homogeneity and their link to the land, Laurie's colour palette reflects the sky and the promise of something beyond the life that was chosen for her.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mabel Wonnacott'.

MABEL WONNACOTT

Cast

Emily Rocha as *Laurie Moss*



Emily Rocha is a Canadian soprano with Portuguese-Kiwi roots. She is currently a member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio. During the Canadian Opera Company's 2025/2026 season, Emily performs as Countess Ceprano and the Page (*Rigoletto*) and covers several leading roles including Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*), Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*), and Sophie (*Werther*). This summer she will debut with the National Ballet of Canada for their production of *Anna Karenina* as the soprano soloist. Recent operatic highlights include Kate Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*, COC), Anna (cover, *Nabucco*, COC), Adina (*L'elisir d'amore*, North York Concert Orchestra), and Micaela (*Carmen*, Southern Ontario Lyric Opera). Emily was the 2nd Prize Winner at the COC Ensemble Studio Competition, District Winner at the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, 3rd Prize Winner at the COC Quilico Awards, and received the Nora London Encouragement Award from the George and Nora London Foundation. Emily's recent concert work includes the premiere of *Vuelo* (Ileana Perez Velazquez) at the Tanglewood Music Festival, Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder* with the UTSO as the U of T Concerto Competition Winner, Soprano Soloist in Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the North York Concert Orchestra and Pax Christi Chorale, and Soprano Soloist in Fauré's *Requiem* with the Northumberland Orchestra and Choir. Emily is a Vocal Fellow alumna of the Tanglewood Music Festival and an MMus graduate of U of T Opera.

David Walsh as *Martin*



David Walsh, born and raised in Toronto, and finished his Diploma of Opera Performance at the University of Toronto with Honours in 2022. From there, David has participated in a wide range of vocal performances. A couple highlights of the 2024/25 season was David performing as the Tenor Soloist with the Peterborough Singers for Mozart's *Requiem* as well as the Tenor Soloist for Chorus Niagara's *Messiah*. This past summer, he debuted the role of Nemorino in North York Concert Orchestra's production of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*, as well as Conception in a new production with new libretto of Ravel's *A Spanish Hour* in Vancouver. David continues to sing with the Canadian Opera Company Chorus and will be returning for their spring season. In the winter of 2023, David made his debut with the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra as Count Almaviva in a performance of *The Barber of Seville*. He made his role debut as Martin in Aaron Copland's opera *The Tender Land* in Spring 2022 with U of T Opera. A highlight of 2022 was when he performed as the Tenor soloist in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* with Chorus Niagara. At U of T Opera in Fall 2021, he made his role debut as Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*. As well as an avid singer, David is an avid biker. This form of transportation is the way he practices a lot of his repertoire. So, if you ever see a blur of red hair and hear some Donizetti or Fauré on the downtown streets of Toronto, you have most likely encountered David Walsh.

Ben Wallace as *Top*



“Versatile and vocally powerful” baritone Ben Wallace currently studies at the University of Toronto and will be joining the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio in August. He was a winner of the 2025 Toronto Mozart Vocal Competition, recipient of the Laurier Alumni Gold Medal, and a winner of the Laurier Concerto Competition. Recent operatic highlights include Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* (UofT Opera), Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Highlands Opera Studio), Prospero in *Tempest Songbook* (UofT Opera), Pandolfe in *Cendrillon* (UofT Opera), Billy Bigelow in *Carousel* (Cambridge Symphony/P&P), Le Dancaïre/Moralès in *Carmen* (SOLO), John Brooke in *Little Women* (Opera Laurier), and Barone Douphol/Dottore Grenvil in *La traviata* (KW Symphony). Last summer, Ben travelled to the Banff Centre to workshop a new opera by Ian Cusson and Royce Vavrek. On the concert stage, Ben has performed as the baritone soloist for *Messiah*, the *Requiems* of Fauré, Duruflé, and Brahms, Bach’s *Ascension Oratorio*, and various Bach cantatas with organizations including the Grand Philharmonic Choir, Grand River Chorus, Symphony in the Barn, Arcady Ensemble, Chor Amica, and Spiritus Ensemble. Also a conductor, Ben formed his own Kitchener-based chamber choir and orchestra in 2022 and has since conducted the world premières of three choral works by Canadian composer Justin Lapierre. He conducted the premiere of Justin’s new oratorio, *The Gatherers*, in Kitchener & Guelph.

Jennifer Routhier as *Ma Moss*



Toronto-based mezzo-soprano Jennifer Routhier is a vibrant member of Canada’s opera and classical music community. Praised for her “warm, clear mezzo” (Opera Canada) and “deep, rich and flexible” tone (Schmopera, 2022), she attacks each role she performs with vigor and commitment to character. Jennifer is a Dora Mavor Moore award recipient and prize winner of the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition. She has performed with Tapestry Opera, New Music Concerts, Opera in Concert, Kingston Symphony, and the Glenn Gould School Opera. Recent operatic roles include Mme. de Croissy (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), Helena (cover, *R.U.R a Torrent of Light*), Principessa (*Suor Angelica*), and Sorceress (*Dido and Aeneas*). Jennifer is a co-founder of DUOver, a contemporary ensemble with pianist Natasha Fransblow. Their first album, generously funded through the Ballytobin Foundation and the Canada Council for the Arts, is set to release in the 2025/26 season. Jennifer is equally at home in classical and contemporary music genres, performing with jazz, rock, and folk ensembles throughout Toronto. Abroad, Jennifer was the soloist in Scott Macmillan’s *Celtic Mass for the Sea* performed at Carnegie Hall with the Canadian Celtic Choir. Jennifer was the first Vocal Scholar at the Glenn Gould School (2019/2020) and holds a Master’s in Voice Performance from the University of Toronto. Off-stage, Jennifer is a professional engineer specializing in decarbonization and sustainability on some of Canada’s biggest infrastructure projects.

Daniela Carreon Herrera as *Beth Moss*



Daniela is a versatile Mexican singer who uses her voice to celebrate life and share the story of humanity. She trained at The Glenn Gould School of Music with Adrienne Pieczonka and Jason Howard. At 24 she was awarded 3rd Prize in the VII Linus Lerner International Voice Competition. Her passion for music is a lifetime dedication that has brought her to perform Pop, Jazz, Art Song and Opera around Mexico, Canada, USA, and Europe. Some of her leading roles include Laretta (Gianni Schicchi), Musetta (La Bohème), Pamina (Die Zauberflöte) and Gretel (Hänsel und Gretel). In her spare time, Daniela enjoys reading, writing, interviewing people she admires, doing sports, and FaceTime with friends and family around the globe. You can follow her on social media IG: @danicarreonh

Matthew Black as *Grandpa Moss*



Matthew Black is a Toronto-based baritone and recent graduate of the University of Toronto's Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance. In Fall 2025, he will begin the Artist Diploma Program at the Glenn Gould School. Matthew has performed as a soloist under Paul Angew from Les Arts Florissants, with Andrea Bocelli and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and appeared in productions including Cosí fan Tutte, Cendrillon, and Dido and Aeneas. He has trained at AIMS in Paris and Tafelmusik's Summer Baroque Institute, and is a recipient of the Luciano Pavarotti scholarship and the DRG grant for study and masterclasses with Les Arts Florissants.

Alvaro Vazquez as *Mr. Splinters*



Mexican Tenor Alvaro Vazquez graduated from the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto obtaining a Voice performance diploma. Alvaro performed the role of Ajax II from the opera La Belle Helene for the school's annual spring opera conducted by Uri Mayer at Koerner Hall. He was cast as the Miller, the lead role in the opera El Gato con Botas by Xavier Monsalvatge for the Glenn Gould School Fall Opera conducted by Peter Tifenbach. He made his debut with Mississauga Symphony Orchestra and Opera York singing the role of El Remendado from the opera Carmen by Bizet conducted by Denis Mastromonaco. He has performed at the Windermere village festival of the arts in Muskoka as a Tenor soloist in a recital of Opera, Zarzuela and Art Song and sang Gastone in Opera York's and Mississauga Symphony Orchestra production of La Traviata. In 2023 he performed the role of Monostatos in Opera Yorks production of Magic Flute and debuted the role of Nemorino from the opera L'elisir d'amore. In 2024 he participated as a tenor soloist with York Symphony Orchestra for a night of Opera Arias in February 2024 and performed the role of Elder Hayes in the opera Susannah with Toronto City Opera and Borsa in the opera Rigoletto with Opera York.

Maria Milenic as *Mrs. Splinters*



Croatian-Canadian mezzo-soprano, Maria Milenic, who “displays a rich, full sound” (LudwigVan Toronto) is looking forward to joining Toronto City Opera for her third season. Originally from Newmarket Ontario, Maria has established a strong musical presence in Toronto, Canada. A University of Toronto alum, she also holds an Advanced Artist Diploma in Voice and Opera studies from the Glenn Gould School. Maria’s voice thrives in contemporary opera, and one of her favourite roles to date is Minskwoman in Dove’s Flight, which she performed on the Koerner Hall stage. She has also taken a part in the 21C Festival, where she had the honour of premiering Chaya Czernowin’s piece The Habekhi (The Crying), written for mezzo-soprano, ensemble, and electronics, and gave a “remarkable performance with weird outwardly sounds somewhere between singing and crying” (Operaramblings). Other stage highlights include Hänsel in Hänsel und Gretel (Berlin Opera Academy), Mrs. McLean in Floyd’s Susannah (Toronto City Opera) , Mercedes in Bizet’s Carmen (Toronto City Opera), Cherubino in Le Nozze di Figaro (Saluzzo Opera), Ljubica in Ana Sokolovic’s Svadba (The Glenn Gould School), Ada in Ivan Caryl’s The Shop Girl (COSA), and Mrs. Hildebrand in Weil’s Street Scene (University of Toronto), among others. Maria’s talent doesn’t go unnoticed – in 2024, she was the first-place prize winner in the OMFA provincials in the open voice category for singers aged under 28 in Ontario. Apart from opera engagements, she has been a featured soloist with the York Symphony Orchestra, the Arcady Ensemble, and is also a part of a voice-guitar duo entitled “MileBib”, with classical guitarist, Christ Habib. The two enjoy performing early music transcribed for voice and guitar together, as well as Slavic art-song, which is part of her cultural heritage and she holds close to her heart. This fall, Maria will be an official McPhee artist in Calgary Opera’s Young Artist Studio, where she is most looking forward to performing the role of Sandman in Hansel and Gretel, in English this time!

James Coole-Stevenson as *Mr. Jenks*



James Coole-Stevenson, baritone, has impressed audiences in a number of operatic roles including Sydney Carton in Arthur Benjamin's A Tale Of Two Cities, Demetrius in Britten's Midsummer night's dream, and Don Giovanni in Mozart's Don Giovanni. His sensitivity and nuance in art song, opera and sacred music, as well as his wide reaching musical interests has been a defining characteristic in his career. Currently living and working as a musician in Toronto, he strives for authenticity in each performance. In the Spring of 2024, James had his professional debut as Ping and the Mandarin in Puccini’s Turandot, through the Gate City Bank Fargo-Moorhead Young Artist Program. It was there that he fostered a love for Puccini, and developed a serious interest in the role of outreach as a tool to educate and introduce people to opera. With his newfound desire to broaden Opera’s reach, James had the honor of participating in Manitoba Opera’s Digital Emerging Artist’s Program, where he worked with several industry talents to create a video project tracing his Newfoundland heritage through the lens of traditional folk songs collected by Maud Carpeles and Ralph Vaughan-Williams. He was able to travel to his grandfather’s ancestral home where he met and interviewed long lost relatives about the importance of music in the small village of Newman’s Cove, Newfoundland. He hopes that through his music, he can share his passion with the world.

Vivien Illion as *Mrs. Jenks*



Soprano Vivien Illion is a passionate explorer of music from across the gamut of classical vocal repertoire. She is excited to be returning to Toronto, her home city, having just completed a Master of Music in Voice and Opera at McGill University in Montréal, QC. Recently, Vivien performed the role of Lena in Ana Sokolović's *Svadba*, and gave a solo recital exploring various strategies for audience accessibility and engagement: contemporary music, accessible formatting, and singing in the audience vernacular. Vivien is incredibly grateful to be the recipient of a Canada Graduate Scholarships Masters Award (SSHRC) which funded this research-creation project. Vivien is passionate about presenting classical vocal music in ways that meaningfully serve her community. She is developing a portfolio of skills that will allow her to do this both on and offstage, including production management, stage management, and stage direction. With her collective, Pick-Up Opera, she created an original English adaptation of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* for young audiences, set in outer space, and performed the role of Pamina. Other roles with Pick-Up Opera have included Serpina in Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona*, Cherubino in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Anne 1 in Cecilia Livingston's *Singing Only Softly*.

Noelle Slaney as *Laurie Moss (Cover)*



Both on and off stage, soprano NOELLE SLANEY is unapologetically herself. Being a born and bred Newfoundlander, music has always been an inherent part of her life and though she now resides in Toronto where "the buildings reach the clouds," she continues to be an active performer of opera and concert repertoire and strives to challenge the way people think about the world in every performance. Praised for her "lovely, rich tone" and "enviable coloratura", Noelle was one of eight finalists in the Canadian Opera Company Centre Stage Competition in 2018, and was awarded second place in the vocal category of the Federation of Music Festivals' National Competition in 2016. She holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in vocal performance from Memorial University of Newfoundland and a Master's degree in opera performance from the University of Toronto. Some favourite highlights of Noelle's include Laurie Moss in *The Tender Land* (University of Toronto), Carlotta in the Atlantic Canadian debut of *Phantom of the Opera* (Opera on the Avalon), Monica in *The Medium* (MUN Opera) and Cunegonde in *Candide* (MUN Wind Ensemble). A lover of contemporary music projects, she has added her voice to performances of excerpts of R. Murray Schafer's *Wolf Music* and *Patria IV* (Octatonic Decadence), *A Window to a Dream* (Cultural Interchange - 360), and *Songbook XII* (Tapestry Opera). This season, Noelle is the soprano soloist in Brahms' *Requiem* (MET Festival Choir), *Carmina Burana* (VOCA), and *Voyage en Acadie*, a solo recital presented with Dakota Scott-Digout (Noon at MET).



Aemilia Moser as *the fiddler*

Aemilia Moser is a Canadian-Austrian soprano and violinist based in Toronto, Ontario. She has performed both principal and supporting roles in a diverse array of works, ranging from Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* to Massenet's *Cendrillon*. Her repertoire includes roles such as Despina (*Così fan tutte*), Nora (*Riders to the Sea*), Ariel (*The Tempest Songbook*), La Fée (*Cendrillon*), La Modista and Minardi (*Il cappello di paglia di Firenze*), Virtù (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Pierrot (*Pierrot Lunaire*), and Nymph (*The Fairy Queen*). Equally adept in concert repertoire, Aemilia has performed as a soloist with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Edmonton, the Alberta Baroque Society, the Lavinia Ensemble, the University of Manitoba Wind Ensemble, and the River City Chamber Orchestra. In 2023, she was selected to be a young artist in Manitoba Opera's Digital Emerging Artist Program, where she created the short film *Sovra il sento*. Other notable accomplishments include an Encouragement Award at the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition (North Dakota district), first place at the CFMTA National Voice Competition and second place in the University of Manitoba Concerto Competition. Aemilia holds a master's degree from the University of Toronto, studying under Elizabeth McDonald. Previous teachers include Tracy Dahl, Mel Braun, Elizabeth Turnbull, and Robert Uchida (violin).

Creative Team

Jennifer Tung - Conductor



A Dora nominated conductor (*Gould's Wall*), Jennifer Tung is the Artistic Director of Toronto City Opera and assistant conductor of the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra. In 2020/21, she was selected as a conducting fellow in the inaugural year of the Women in Musical Leadership program. Jennifer has conducted with the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Opera McGill, Okanagan Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic and Kamloops Symphony. In 2023, Jennifer conducted the world premieres of *Show Room* (Rodney Sharman/Atom Egoyan) and *Of the Sea* (Ian Cusson/Kanika Ambrose). Jennifer is on faculty at Toronto's Glenn Gould School.

Ivan Estey Jovanovich - Music Director/Pianist



Ivan Estey Jovanovic is the accompanist / Music Director at TCO. He completed his BMus and MMus in piano performance at the Belgrade University of Arts. In 2004, he joined Belgrade Opera Orchestra as répétiteur and concert pianist and in 2005 joined their staff as a principal vocal coach. In 2013 he completed his MMus. in Collaborative Piano at the UofT, won the Gwendolyn Williams Koldofsky Prize in Accompanying, then joined UofT's Opera Division as a vocal coach and pianist. He is a vocal coach and harpsichordist in UofT's Early Music Department and Schola Cantorum and the vocal coach/harpsichordist with Toronto Lyric Opera.

Mabel Wonnacott - Stage Director



Mabel Wonnacott is a Tkaronto based opera director, arts educator and puppeteer whose work has been described as "lively and imaginative" and "ingenious" (Opera Ramblings, LudwigVan Toronto). Mabel's 2024/25 season also includes *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* and *L'enfant Prodigue* with The Glenn Gould School, *L'amour und Liebe* and *The Music of Britta Johnson* with U of T, *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Laurier University, *The Paper Man* (in collaboration with Duo Cichorium), and *Ramla and the Dessert*, a new work by playwright Nehal El-Hadi. In 2024, Mabel directed the world premier of *Lysistrata Reimagined*, a new opera by Michael Albano and the U of T New Composer's Collective. In 2023, she was the associate director for the Banff Centre's production of *Don Giovanni* (original direction by Joel Ivany) and was the assistant director for Ivany's production of *Don Giovanni* with the NAC Orchestra. In 2024 Mabel was the assistant director for the CCOC's production of *The Hobbit*, and Toronto City Opera's production of *Carmen*. She holds a diploma in Operatic Stage Directing from the University of Toronto where she was the assistant director for their 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons. Mabel also holds a Masters in Voice from Western University where she was the assistant director for their 2019/2020 and 2020/21 seasons. An avid believer in opera as a vehicle for human connection and social change, Mabel is also the Ontario Provincial coordinator for Opera InReach.

Nathan Bruce- Lighting & Projection Designer



Nathan is a Toronto based Projection and Lighting Designer and New Media Artist. Recent theatre credits include projection design for 'The Magic Flute' (The Royal Conservatory of Music), lighting design for '18 Jews Order Chinese Food' (Persephone Theatre, Saskatoon), and video design for 'WIGHTS' (Crow's Theatre). Recent installations include creator of 'Try To Forget' (St. Anne's Parish Hall, Long Winter), co-creator of 'After The Flood' (Charles Street Video) and co-creator of 'Love Across Distance' (The ArQuives, Nuit Blanche). He has recently concluded a mentorship role with an emerging artist to create a multimedia installation from January-April 2025 with Charles Street Video.

Alexandra Christofides - Costume Designer



Alexandra has been doing Fashion & Costume Design, for over 30 years & loves this Creative outlet with a diverse portfolio in Fashion Designs, Opera, Musical Theatre, Community Theatre, Ballets, and School Productions.

Alexandra's most recent & current works include working on costume design & wardrobe for "Mother of the Maid" Theatre Aurora, "Surrender Dorothy" Curtain Club Theatre Richmond Hill and "Magic Flute" Opera York, "Die Fledermaus" Toronto City Opera, "Die Fledermaus" Opera York, "Rigoletto", Opera York, "Susannah" Toronto City Opera, "Angel's Bone" Canadian Collaboration, "Halfway There" Curtain Club, "The Night Before Christmas" Smile Theatre, "Opera Queens", Opera Queens, "James & the Giant Peach" Branksome Hall, "Silver Dagger" Curtain Club. Alexandra has designed and created speciality "set dressings" for productions with the most recent being "La Traviata" Opera York. Alexandra is looking forward to bringing her creativity into the costume design for "The Tender and" to help bring this story to life on stage.

Allison Grant - Choreographer



Allison directs and choreographs Opera and Music Theatre at Opera Houses and Universities across North America. She recently directed Die Zauberflöte at Koerner Hall for The Glenn Gould School. Favorite productions include Roméo et Juliette and Così Fan Tutte (Vancouver Opera); Le Nozze di Figaro (National Arts Centre and Sarasota Opera); The Pirates of Penzance (Anchorage Opera); Carmen and Alcina (Western University); The Magic Flute (Hawaii Opera Theatre and Sarasota Opera); and L'Italiana in Algeri (L'Opéra de Montréal). Choreography credits include Dido and Aeneas, Don Giovanni, Eugene Onegin and Queen of Spades (Canadian Opera Company) as well as numerous productions of Fledermaus and The Merry Widow (Hawaii, Edmonton, The COC, and Hamilton Opera). She has directed, choreographed or developed numerous new works including The Auction (Westben Festival) and is delighted to be working with the enormously talented young director, Mabel Wonnacott.

Gabriel Graziano - Set Construction



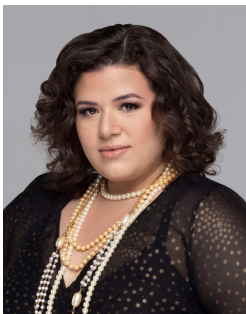
Gabriel Graziano is pleased to return to Toronto City Opera. Gabriel has been associated with Toronto Opera Repertoire / Toronto City Opera for over 40 years. He has been involved in many different areas, including lighting design, stage management and was the first person to direct a Toronto City Opera production other than his mentor, Giuseppe Macina.

Emily Neufeld - Scenic Artist & Prop Construction



Emily Neufeld is a multidisciplinary artist living in so-called Ottawa, bringing an irreverent, absurdist sense of humour to her work. Her video piece *Hen in the Foxhouse*, presented during the BFA final showcase at Ottawa U in 2019, won the Vistek Award. Emily is one of the founders of *Nosy Mag*, an Ottawa-based online arts publication. Her installation *Surely You Can't Be Serious?* was featured in *Nosy Mag's* 2024 exhibition 'Dreams and Demands' at Gallery 115. She is half of the Department of Creative Disobedience, a puppeteering group that performed in Almonte's Puppets Up! festival in 2024. Their cabaret piece was praised by Kids in the Hall's Mark McKinney for its "excellent chickenwork". This year, Emily created props for Elevator Theatre's production of *Next to Normal*. The *Tender Land* is Emily's first foray into creating scenic art.

Stephanie Sedlbauer- Stage Manager



Stephanie Sedlbauer is a dynamic stage manager and interdisciplinary artist with a deep passion for opera as a living, innovative art form. A graduate of the University of Western Ontario and McGill University in voice and opera performance, she brings a performer's insight and a producer's precision to every project. As a flexible and expressive *zwischenfach* singer, her work spans a wide range of repertoire from Verdi to Led Zeppelin, marked by vocal beauty and a powerful stage presence. She has stage-managed for Opera McGill as an alumna and served as Artistic Associate with *Musique 3 Femmes*, a trailblazing indie opera company in Montreal, where she supported both stage management and production coordination. Stephanie is also the founder and producer of *Le Pub Classique*, a concert series that uplifts and connects emerging classical musicians in Montreal. Her work behind the camera is equally respected: as a headshot and production photographer, her images have been featured in publications such as *Opera Canada* and *La Scena Musicale*. Stephanie's approach to opera is rooted in respect for historical tradition while fiercely advocating for its evolution. She is dedicated to building artist-led, community-driven productions that speak to contemporary audiences and create

Claire Thornton - Assistant Stage Manager



Claire Thornton (She/Her) is a Stage Manager from Oakville, Ontario. Starting as a performer on the stage, Claire earned her Master of Music Performance in Opera and Voice from McGill University following a Bachelor of Music Education at Western University. It is through her schooling as a singer that she discovered and fostered her love of stage management. Select management and production assistant credits include: The Monkiest King (Canadian Children's Opera Company), Nabucco, The Cunning Little Vixen, Fidelio (Canadian Opera Company), The Handmaid's Tale, Indians on Vacation (Banff Centre for the Performing Arts & Creativity), The Light in the Piazza, Blond Eckbert, Semele (Opera McGill), Così fan tutte (Good Mess Opera Theatre) and The Consul (Opera NUOVA). As a singer, Claire has performed as a soloist with the Oakville Symphony Orchestra and in productions of A World Goes Round, All Things Lovely, Don Giovanni (Opera McGill), Catch Me If You Can (King's Players), and If/Then (Theatre Western). This is her first production with Toronto City Opera.

Toronto
City
Opera

80
ANNIVERSARY
SEASON

25/26 Season

Celebrating 80 Years
of Opera for Everyone



PAGLIACCI

&

ORPHEUS IN THE UNDERWORLD

PLUS: THE MACINA COMPETITION & VIVA VOCE FUNDRAISER

FUNDED BY
THE CITY OF TORONTO
TORONTO
ARTS _ COUNCIL

WE ARE TORONTO CITY OPERA



Susannah 2024, Photo Credit : Dahlia Katz

Our Mission

Toronto City Opera is passionately committed to opera for everyone. We give young professionals an opportunity to perform principal roles with coaching in musicianship and stagecraft. We give our amateur choristers inspiration and skills so that they too can perform in a fully staged opera. And for our community we provide affordable access to this grand synthesis of music, drama, dance, and design to raise up the human spirit of everyone it touches.

Our History

We are Toronto's longest running opera company – continuously since 1946. TCO was founded as an Opera Workshop program in collaboration with the Toronto School Board. In 1967 Giuseppe Macina became Artistic Director and transformed the program to perform fully staged productions as Toronto Opera Repertoire. In 1980 Toronto City Opera was incorporated as a registered charity. Giuseppe Macina retired in 2013 and in 2017 we became an independent opera company separate from the school board, fully in control of our destiny.

Board of Directors

Gianni Minardi, President
Onita Dey, Vice President
Sandra Tang, Treasurer
Linda Gruson, Secretary
Chris Lea
Karlijn Smit
Peter Price
Steve Guard
Susy Cimicata
Ex-officio: Henry Tang

Our Artistic Vision

We believe the classic opera repertoire continues to inspire and delight audiences and performers from diverse cultures. Our ambition is to engage contemporary audiences through the timeless appeal of these works, not to preserve them as museum pieces. We fulfill their creators' intentions, in collaboration with creative stage directors, by performing the works as written while presenting fresh, original, live productions that enthral our community with their artistic truth.

Our Program

Each year, Toronto City Opera presents at least two fully staged operas. Our early career professional soloists are selected after open auditions, but our amateur non-auditioned community chorus remains open to all. This unique combination provides both professional development opportunities and community engagement. That community engagement extends beyond our chorus as the audience they bring with them are often having their first opera experience – their excitement is wonderful to feel.

Staff

Jennifer Tung, Artistic Director
Ivan Jovanovic, Music Director
Nicholas Borg, Administrative Director
Alexander Cappellazzo, Development and Client Relations Manager

Our Donors

Sept. 2024-June 2025

We are sincerely grateful for each and every donation.

\$1500+

Sandra & Henry Tang

\$1,000+

Pierre Wong • Mable Cheng • Augustin Carnovale

\$500+

Letizia and Joseph Paradiso • Mary Day • Anna & Joe Lobianco

\$250+

Annamaria Tarantino • Barbara Thomson • Carlos Lemus • Carmela DelleDonne • Ela Bhala • Gianni Minardi • Jeanne Chan • Jimmy Tung • John F.Kane • Larry Ptashynski • Maureen Tomlinson • Nancy Tran • Nora & Winston Man • Peter Price • Ron Forbes

up to \$250

Adrian Man • Alice Lan • Ann Lorenc • Anna-Bales Kogan • Bert Frankian • Brian Elliot • Carl Lyons • Carol Chin • Carol Houston • Catherine Pepper • Chris Lea • Claire Li • David Milgram • Debra Zhu • Don Maudsley • Eileen Tesoro • Elizabeth McLeod • Emiliana Blagoeva • Eva Yu • Fiona Isaacson • Fraser Jameison • Fred Drews • Heather Bird • Heather Jamieson • Heather Prophet • Helen Zhao • Henry Wong • Henry Zhang • Iris Au • Jacinth Harrison • Joanna Manning • Johnny Yu • Joseph So • Judith Shaver • Julia Gruson-Wood • June Mastri • Laura Knop-Wright • Laurette Floru • Linda Gruson • Lloy Cook • Lucy Hamboyan • Mang Tang • Maria-Pilar Farzad • Marion Voysey • Mary Hill • Mary-Catherine Boyd • Murielle Gagne • Nana Voevudsky • Nathalie Paulin • Norman Martin • Onita Dey • Rocco DeMiglio • Rosalinda DeMiglio • Stephen Gard • Susy Cimicata • Tina Torlone • Wilda Schutz • Xiyang Zhang

Becoming a TCO Donor gives you access to insider perks such as watching a rehearsal, attending TCO social events, and receiving early access to tickets to ensure you get your preferred seats. You will get the most out of the TCO experience while also bringing the magic of opera to our community.

Visit

torontocityopera.com/donations to
donate today, or email
development@torontocityopera.com
to learn more

FEATURES	TIER 1 - UP TO \$250	TIER 2 - \$250 +	TIER 3 - \$500 +	TIER 4 - \$1000 +	TIER 5 - \$1500 +
Recognition in Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quarterly Behind-the-Scenes Donation Newsletter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Priority Advance Ticketing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Concession Voucher for Two Productions		✓	✓	✓	✓
Invitation to TCO Social Events		✓	✓	✓	✓
Reserved Ticket to Macina Competiton			✓	✓	✓
TCO Chorus Scholarship Program Sponsor			✓	✓	✓
Rehearsal Visit for both productions plus Q & A				✓	✓
Recognition from the Stage					✓
Ticket to Viva Voce Fundraiser Luncheon					✓
Backstage Tour					✓
Sponsor a Soloist					✓

YOUR DONATION MATTERS

Help us create opera for everyone



Don Giovanni 2023 Company and Jennifer Tung

Photo Credit : Elena Emer

Our ticket prices are lower because we want opera to be accessible to everyone! Your essential gift, whatever the amount, will mean that everyone will continue to have access to live opera. You will bring the experience of performing opera to our chorus members and you will also be supporting a program that has helped young Canadians leap into international careers.

We are a charitable, non-profit organization run by a volunteer board of directors. As with all performing arts organizations, box office revenue is not enough. Our fundraisers and private donations contribute more than 1/3 of the revenues we need to mount our productions. You can be sure your donation goes directly to supporting the artists, chorus, and productions.

Donate on our website :
torontocityopera.com/donations
or scan our QR code!



Other ways to donate:

1. E-transfer to treasurer@torontocityopera.com
2. Cheque payable to Toronto City Opera mailed to 27 Everingham Ct, North York, ON M2M 2J6

Please include your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address so we can issue a tax receipt for all donations over \$20.

Sponsors

Toronto City Opera would like to thank:



Our thanks to the Ontario Charitable Gaming Association and Dolphin Gaming for their financial support.

Thanks also to our TCO volunteers for their diligent attendance at Dolphin Gaming last season: Onita Dey, Beverly Gibson, Don Maudsley, Gianni Minardi, Vivien Mann, Catherine McQuaid, Heather Pike, Peter Price. Jeffrey Reitz, Henry Tang, Sandra Tang.



Credits & Thanks

- **Al Green Theatre Staff:** Peter Fehlhaber, Daniel Krolik, Tiffany Yaw & the staff of the Miles Nadal JCC
- **Producer:** Nicholas Borg
- **Production Support:** Joseph Pepelnak, Henry and Sandra Tang
- **Poster Design:** Alexa Frankian
- **Front of House Volunteers:**