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## **Opera Atelier Receives \$83,000 Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant In Support of Online Youth Education Programming**

**Toronto, ON** — In late 2020, Opera Atelier learned that it was the recipient of an \$83,000 Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), an agency of the Government of Ontario, to provide greater accessibility to the company's free online *Making of an Opera* (MOAO) education program for Ontario youth. The Resilient Communities Fund was developed to help non-profit organizations rebound and recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

"This investment by the OTF to assist in the creation of an online education program for Ontario youth is a significant investment in our community," said Suze Morrison, MPP for Toronto Centre. "The investment has not only helped Opera Atelier pivot online during the pandemic, developing a high-quality online learning platform that offers flexibility and greater accessibility to youth across the province, it has also provided critical income to artists in one of the hardest-hit sectors in Ontario."

"We are thrilled to have the generous support of the Resilient Communities Fund," said Marshall Pynkoski C.M., Opera Atelier Co-Founding Artistic Director. "The exposure to and the demystification of the performing arts is essential for young people for a myriad of developmental reasons - self-expression, connection, creativity, empathy and understanding. If we hope to ensure a vibrant and thriving cultural sector as part of Ontario's future, it is our responsibility to provide zero barrier opportunities for youth to access the arts. Thanks to the incredible support of the OTF we are excited and fortunate to be able to expand Opera Atelier's popular online education programming and to continue making a meaningful impact on the lives of young people."

Through the OTF grant, Opera Atelier engaged an education consultant to successfully guide the creation and implementation of the *Making of an Opera* program's transition to a digital platform. Opera Atelier collaborated with videographer Marcel Canzona to create new content with the artistic team, stage management, and performing artists, resulting in engaging online learning modules for music, dance, movement, and set design. Last year, students received free access to the company's two streamed 2020/21 season productions. As well, Opera Atelier's Artist In Residence, Measha Brueggergosman, led livestreamed master classes on Zoom for Ontario students.

"As a high school vocal music teacher, I was excited to be able to take my students to Opera Atelier's *Making of an Opera* program. I knew first-hand the incredible impression it would leave on them because I was personally introduced to opera in high school through attending the *Making of an Opera* program myself," said Megan Alexander-Lui, vocal teacher at Alexander Mackenzie High School in Richmond Hill, Ontario. "This year as many organizations shut down operations due to the pandemic, Opera Atelier continued to employ artists and to conduct outreach as well. My students were able to interact with the MOAO online resources and even had the absolutely unbelievable opportunity to participate in a masterclass with soprano Measha Brueggergosman!"

*Making of an Opera's* goal is to expose teenagers and young adults to all aspects involved with an opera production, and to give them the opportunity to take part in an immersive, hands-on, full day workshop experience. Pre-pandemic, more than 1,000 students annually would join Opera Atelier in the rehearsal hall for interactive workshops, working with the creative team to explore opera productions, including vocal technique, choreography, stage combat and acting. The culmination for participants, their teachers - and potentially family members - is attending a mainstage Opera Atelier production. This experience, including the live performance, is free of charge.

"Since its inception in 1995, Opera Atelier's *Making of an Opera* program has enjoyed enormous success - so much so, that we have been unable to keep up with demand from schools who wish to participate," said Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg C.M., Opera Atelier Co-Founding Artistic Director. "We are delighted to reach an even wider audience than we ever could have imagined with the support of the Resilient Communities Fund grant."

Opera Atelier is a world leader in the rediscovery and revitalization of period opera and ballet, particularly works from the Baroque era. Through historically-informed productions, Marshall Pynkoski and Jeannette Lajeunesse Zingg seek to provide a thrilling theatrical experience for modern audiences. Opera Atelier's productions are performed with Tafelmusik, Elisa Citterio, Music Director on period instruments, and incorporate music, dance and

theatrical staging with strong production values.

In addition to producing two productions a year in the heart of Toronto's entertainment district, Opera Atelier is dedicated to the education of youth and young artists, and offers a robust slate of education, enrichment and outreach opportunities that engage and educate new and existing audience members of all ages, particularly youth. To learn more, visit: [operaatelier.com](http://operaatelier.com)

Opera Atelier wishes to thank David Green and Daphne Wagner, Lita and Michael Green for their generous support of the *Making of an Opera* program, as well as Jerry and Joan Lozinski for their support of Founding Co-Artistic Director Marshall Pynkoski's involvement in Opera Atelier's education programs.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario's non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario's economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit [otf.ca](http://otf.ca) to learn more.

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