vancouveropera

2021–2022 SEASON



ANNUAL REPORT

vancouver**opera**

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Jonathan Darlington

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COVER PHOTO: KRISZTINA SZABÓ AND MIREILLE LEBEL IN VO'S 2021 PRODUCTION OF *ORFEO ED EURIDICE*. PHOTO BY TIM MATHESON.
THIS PAGE: NE. SANS OPERA & DANCE, DANCER TED LITTLEMORE. PHOTO BY FLICK HARRISON.



The 2021–2022 season marked Vancouver Opera's return to the live stage following the almost complete shutdown of performances across the country, and indeed the globe. We could not be more pleased to be able to report that it was a success.

Artists and audiences returned to the theatre with gusto, reveling in the high-quality artistic experiences for which Vancouver Opera is known. We entertained, we engaged, and we celebrated—together! Vancouver Opera was the only opera company in Canada who announced a season of live performances, and was able to deliver that season to our audiences with no cancellations or casting adjustments.

And, we did it in a sustainable way. Vancouver Opera is actively pursuing Climate Smart certification and will be the first performing arts organization to achieve this recognition, later this year. From LED lighting instruments, evaluating the impact of shipping productions from around the globe vs. creating our own productions, to the impact our staff has on getting to and from work, green thinking informs everything we do. Moving forward, it will increasingly serve as a lens for decision making.

We're also very proud of the diversity and excellence we were able to bring to our stages this season. We increased female representation behind the podium, presented diverse casts and creative teams, and created opportunities for underserved groups to participate and be heard in our art form. This important work will continue next season, and every season in the future.

This Annual Report details a number of activities: from our in-theatre presentations to our educational initiatives; from our fundraising events to our community engagement efforts. With your generous support, we staged a return to form and set the stage for many seasons to come. We offer you our profound thanks.

Sincerely,
Tom Wright, General Director



On behalf of the Board of Directors of Vancouver Opera Association, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this look back at our 2021–2022 season. Lingering effects of the pandemic aside, the season was full of glorious singing, beautiful music, and a return to in-person presentations—that's worth celebrating. From the contemporary stylings of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, to the glorious music of *Cavalleria Rusticana in Concert,* to the slyly hilarious *HMS Pinafore*, there was much to applaud this season.

Behind the scenes, there was also much to celebrate. We are grateful to our public sector funders for coming to the table with pandemic relief funding; our corporate sponsors for supporting us with their partnerships; and our donors for believing in our vision and sustaining us through thick and thin.

With the generous support we received, our financial picture, although not optimal, is stable, and we look forward to parlaying our artistic successes into financial success as we return to full houses and uncomplicated artist travel. As the grandest (and most costly) of art forms, producing opera is always a challenge, and in uncertain times it is even more perilous. We're grateful to the management for the steady hand and deft decision making.

We offer our deepest gratitude to all the donors, sponsors, patrons, subscribers, volunteers, staff, artists, musicians and partners. We are proud to be part of such a wonderful community, and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

Sincerely,
Richard Rees, Board Chair

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Christoph Willibald Gluck

ORFEO ED EURIDICE

December 4 & 5, 2021

"Surely this imaginative staging of *Orfeo ed Euridice*—so rapturously applauded by the opening night crowd—is a harbinger of similar resourcefulness while VO eases back into—dare we hope—full seasons of live-staged opera"

—Opera Canada

Presented in partnership with Ne.Sans Opera & Dance



Our first staged opera performed live since the pandemic hit in 2020 certainly did not play it safe. Vancouver Opera's first staging of Gluck's Baroque classic began with a literal bang, as Amore, played by Mireille Asselin, popped a white balloon to release a shower of glittering red confetti. This striking opening set the scene for a playful production performed with a palette of striking black, white, and red.

The extraordinary dancers of Ne.Sans Opera & Dance perfectly complemented the performances of Mireille Lebel and Krizstina Szabó in the title roles, while calling back to the stylized conventions of Baroque opera and dance. Conductor Leslie Dala brought a deft and measured touch to the score, with the well-known "Dance of the Blessed Spirits" singled out by multiple critics as a transcendent highlight.

It was a glorious return to the stage after a long absence, and we're grateful to have been able to stage this innovative work before audience restrictions were once again imposed.

Director/Choreographer: Idan Cohen | Conductor: Leslie Dala
Starring: Krisztina Szabó, Mireille Lebel, Mireille Asselin
Dancers: Aiden Cass, Alexis Fletcher, Kate Franklin, Ted Littlemore, Rachel Meyer, Hana Rutka
With the Vancouver Opera Orchestra and Chorus



"What's most exciting about this cool, contemporary production—which could stand strong on any operatic stage in the world—is that it was created entirely by a passionate group of homegrown talent."

—Stir Vancouver

PREVIOUS PAGE: OTHALIE GRAHAM AND JONATHAN DARLINGTON IN VO'S 2022 PRODUCTION OF *CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA IN CONCERT*.
THIS PAGE: VO'S 2021 PRODUCTION OF *ORFEO ED EURIDICE*. PHOTOS BY TIM MATHESON.

Pietro Mascagni

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA IN CONCERT

February 12 & 13, 2022

"Top Canadian singers, a standout chorus, mesmerizing music, and swirling visuals make concert staging a grand affair."

—Stir Vancouver



The new year began with a celebration of the exceptional talent that calls Vancouver, and Vancouver Opera, home. Mascagni's one-act wonder showcased Vancouver Opera Chorus and Orchestra in a work that displayed the passion, power, and zest that animates the best that operatic music has to offer.

Each soloist brought something unique and brilliant to the score, and conductor Jonathan Darlington came out of the pit and on to the stage to deliver an epic, electric interpretation full of nuance and lush melodies. Rising designer Jordan Barianiecki complemented the action with swirling projections that set the Sicilian scene perfectly. Despite pandemic restrictions that kept audiences to 50%, the enthusiastic standing ovation applause went on seemingly forever. It was a beautiful return to live performance.

Director: Amanda Testini | Conductor: Jonathan Darlington
Starring: Othalie Graham, Leah Giselle Field, David Pomeroy, Gregory Dahl, Hillary Tufford
With the Vancouver Opera Orchestra and Chorus



"Being able to see exactly how Darlington works his magic upfront was the single best part of the enterprise."

—Vancouver Sun

VO'S 2022 PRODUCTION OF *CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA IN CONCERT*. PHOTO BY TIM MATHESON.

W.S. Gilbert & Arthur Sullivan

HMS PINAFORE

April 30–May 8, 2022

"Gilbert & Sullivan, who relished in upending social order, probably would have approved."

—Stir Vancouver



The season closed on a lighter note, with the mounting of Gilbert and Sullivan's most popular operetta, *HMS Pinafore*.
With a largely female creative team, an adapted libretto by local comedy legend JD Derbyshire, and a slyly feminist twist on old Victorian tropes, *HMS Pinafore* set sail for contemporary shores with a gender-bent, inclusive, witty parody of class and social norms.

On top of the more serious commentary, it was an uplifting and warm emergence from pandemic restrictions, packed with instantly recognizable tunes, an engaging story, and top-flight singing. Director Brenna Corner (an alumna of Vancouver Opera's Young Artist Program) said it best when she told Stir Vancouver's Janet Smith, "*HMS Pinafore* is like this gem, and we've been looking at it through the light going through one particular angle, and now we're just looking at the jewel through a different angle and seeing different colours that come out of it."

Director: Brenna Corner | Conductor: Rosemary Thomson
Starring: Marcus Nance, Megan Latham, Luka Kawabata, Ernesto Ramirez, Jorell Williams, Caitlin Wood, Peter McGillivray, Hillary Tufford, Jason Cook
With the Vancouver Opera Orchestra and Chorus



"…a delightful combination of forbidden love across class divides"

—Vancouver Sun

VO'S 2022 PRODUCTION OF *HMS PINAFORE*. PHOTO BY TIM MATHESON.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

Project Opera

This long-running program is offered to a wide range of elementary schools in and around Vancouver. Project Opera is a highly interactive program for students that brings the magic of opera into the classroom.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED:
2 SCHOOLS, 8 CLASSROOMS, 203 STUDENTS

Vancouver Opera in Schools

Vancouver Opera in Schools brings professional opera performance to schools throughout the province—it's the largest program of its kind in Canada. T*he Flight of the Hummingbird* is a production developed in conjunction with Pacific Opera Victoria which toured British Columbia schools both virtually and in-person. Due to the pandemic, performances were virtual for 2021–2022.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED: NINE SCHOOLS IN TOTAL PARTICIPATED. WE ESTIMATE 300 KIDS PER SCHOOL STREAMED THE PRODUCTION, FOR A TOTAL OF 2,700 VIEWERS.

Podcast

Inside Vancouver Opera is a unique backstage glimpse into the world of Vancouver Opera. We regularly chat with opera experts, artists, Vancouver Opera staff and others and explore the world of opera on and off the stage.

Pre & Post Show Chats

Pre and show chats are given at the beginning and end of each performance in order to provide additional insights and information to the audience.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED:
PRE-SHOW TALKS AVERAGED AN AUDIENCE OF 220 PER SHOW, OR 1200–1400 PEOPLE FOR THE SEASON. POST-SHOW TALKS ARE ATTENDED BY AN AVERAGE OF 70 PEOPLE PER SHOW, REACHING 560 PEOPLE FOR THE SEASON.

Opera Summary Videos

Vancouver Opera produces a video summary of each opera featuring Canadian artists. These videos are posted on social media in order to educate and inform viewers about the opera. It is a free resource that shares information in a fun, whimsical way that is accessible to all ages.

Kettle Choir

In 2021–2022, Vancouver Opera partnered with the Kettle Society to support the Kettle Choir, a program to help individuals who have been stigmatized and isolated by mental illness regain visibility and rediscover their voices. Forty five artists took part this season, which ended April 1, 2022.







Opera 101

Our newest educational offering Opera 101 is an online course broken into five 90-minute sessions that discusses opera through the eras and genres with a special emphasis on one of Opera's hidden figures each session.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED: 55 PARTICIPANTS

EDI Initiatives

Over the past year our board and staff have been engaged in an ongoing training in equity, diversity, and inclusion. All of our staff members participated in four training sessions this year.

Lobby Activations

A number of performances including stilt walkers and live interactive acting were organized during the Saturday showing of *HMS Pinafore*. Guests to the opera were entertained, educated and quizzed about the opera.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED: ALL ATTENDANTS OF THE OPERA, APPROXIMATELY 600 PEOPLE.

THIS PAGE (L-R): MEMBERS OF THE YULANDA M FARIS YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM AT MCARTHURGLEN; LEAH GISELLE FIELD GIVING A PRE-SHOW CHAT AT THE QUEEN ELIZABETH THEATRE; STUDENTS FROM CHARLES DICKENS ELEMENTARY AT PROJECT OPERA. PHOTOS BY ASHLEY DANIEL FOOT. FACING PAGE: EVAN KORBUT IN *THE FLIGHT OF THE HUMMINGBIRD*. PHOTO BY NADIA ZHENG, COURTESY OF PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA.



OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUNG ARTISTS

Investing in young artists through an intensive residence program is instrumental in preparing them for a successful professional career in opera. The re-envisioned 2021–2022 season enabled Vancouver Opera to continue its commitment to training young artists. The season's Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program class included five returnees and one newcomer.

Amanda Testini – Director
(2019–2020 & 2021–2022)

Amy Seulky Lee – Répétiteur
(2020–Current)

Jonelle Sills – Soprano
(2020–2022)

Hillary Tufford – Mezzo-soprano
(2021–Current)

Ian Cleary – Tenor
(2020–2022)

Luka Kawabata – Baritone
(2020–Current)

Showcasing their talent throughout the season, the young artists appeared on the mainstage in principal roles in *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *HMS Pinafore*, as well as in two performances of the Canadian premiere of Judith Weir's chamber opera, *Blond Eckbert*, conducted by maestro Leslie Dala.

In addition, the artists participated in live and online masterclasses with distinguished mentors including Judith Forst, Kelly Robinson, Kathleen Brett, Patrick Raftery and Daniel Okulitch; music and language coaching with Leslie Dala, Kinza Tyrrell and Tina Chang; Bodyworks with Barbara Towell; Vocal Health with Megan Morrison; Russian Diction with Elena Razlog; and sessions with VO staff.

Even though this was our first live season since the pandemic, the high calibre of training and the artists' performances for various audiences within very rigid restrictions provided unique growth opportunities and truly unforgettable experiences.

Blond Eckbert

Judith Weir's dramatically riveting short story, *Blond Eckbert*, impressively showcased Vancouver opera's talented Young Artists Program's six participants. The four characters sung by soprano Jonelle Sills, mezzo-soprano Hillary Tufford, tenor Ian Cleary, and baritone Luka Kawabata were directed by Amanda Testini and accompanied in rehearsal by repetiteur Amy Seulky Lee, meticulously rehearsed under the direction of Maestro Leslie Dala and coaches Kinza Tyrrell and Tina Chang. Members of the Vancouver Opera Orchestra accompanied the four singers for two performances, providing 60 minutes of intense drama for audience members at our Martha Lou Henley Rehearsal Hall.

2021–2022 YULANDA M. FARIS YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY: Patricia Charles | The Edwina and Paul Heller Memorial Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation Dr. George Luciuk & Dr. Lidia Schuster | Alan and Gwendoline Pyatt Foundation | TD Bank | RBC Foundation

THIS PAGE: YULANDA M. FARIS YOUNG ARTISTS. PHOTO BY GERGO FARKAS. FACING PAGE: GARDEN PARTY PHOTOS BY DANIELLE TURNER.









A MAGICAL AND MUSICAL GARDEN PARTY

In August 2021, Vancouver Opera hosted its second annual Gala in the Garden to tremendous success! Once again hosted outdoors to ensure the safety of our guests, we returned to a lush private garden oasis for an evening of fine dining, wine, and enthralling entertainment from dancers, drummers, and opera stars.

Proceeds supported Vancouver Opera's building campaign, which will allow us to expand our reach with a digital soundstage and cultural hub initiatives – one group under our tenancy collaborated on this very event to bring unique entertainment to our guests.

Thank you to all who attended and supported the event, and a special thank you to Jane McLennan who generously hosted this magical evening.

RE-CONNECTING WITH OUR OPERA FAMILY

The 2021–2022 season also saw the return of donor events throughout the year. We know our opera family was eager for physical re-connection, and as we navigated ever-shifting health restrictions, we were once again able to safely host Prelude Dinners for our Opera Round Table members. On opening night of *Orfeo ed Euridice* in December 2021 and *HMS Pinafore* in April 2022, we returned to the salon at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre to host themed dinners with special guests and were thrilled to be able to re-connect with so many of you. In February 2022, we also hosted dinner for a small group of supporters at the Georgian Court Hotel on opening night of *Cavalleria Rusticana* in Concert.

Thank you to all of our supporters for their dedication and commitment to Vancouver Opera. They have played, and continue to play, an integral role in bringing the very best of opera to the people of Vancouver. We're truly grateful.

SUPPORTING THE OPERA STARS OF TOMORROW

The Vancouver Opera Foundation Bursary Program has recognized over 140 artists who have gone on to impactful operatic careers. The 2021–2022 awards supported 12 promising young singers, instrumentalists, and stage directors. These bursaries are possible because of funds established to support early-career artists and opera students.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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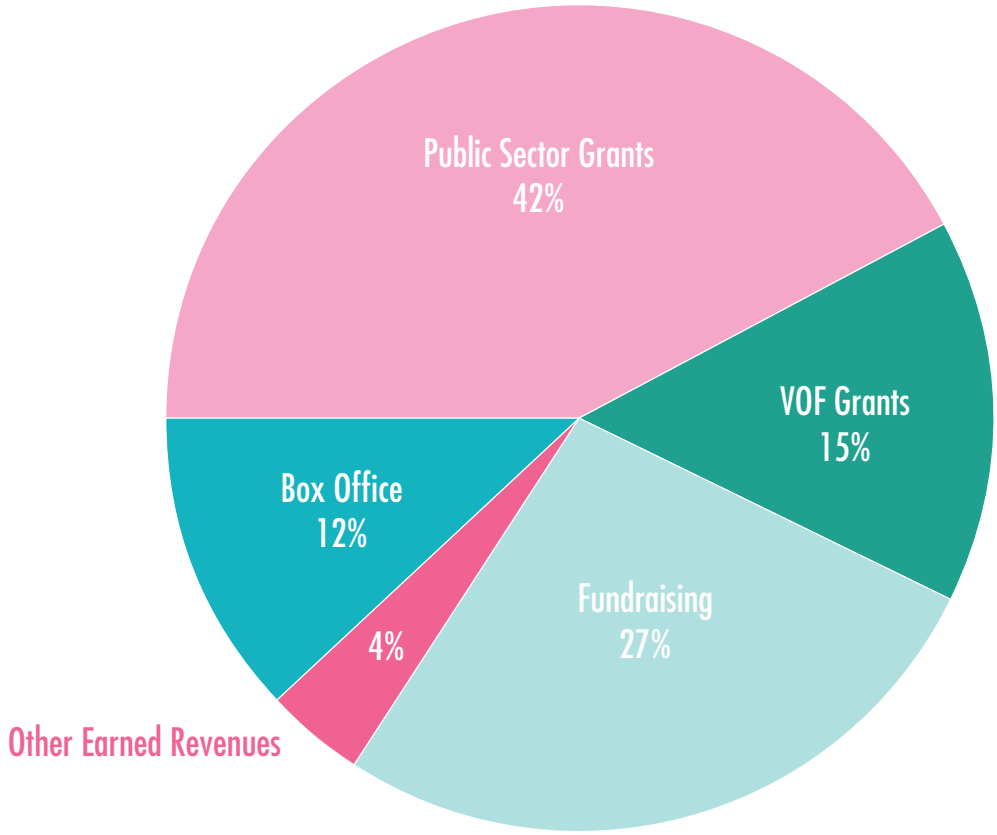
$1,500+
Ann Claire Angus Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation
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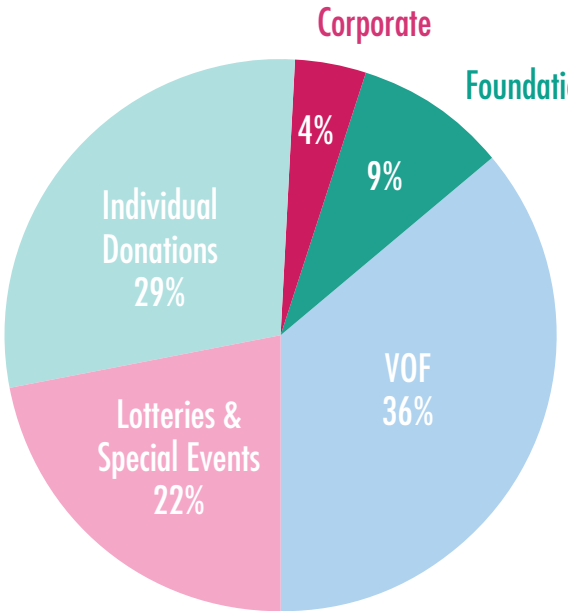
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City of Vancouver
Department of Canadian Heritage
Metro Vancouver
Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture
Community Gaming Grants Branch
Vancouver Civic Theatres

FINANCIALS
REVENUES AT A GLANCE

SEASON TOTAL REVENUE
(in thousands)

Box office	$	798
Other earned revenues	$	272
Fundraising	$	1,799
Grants from the VOF	$	1,009
Public sector grants	$	2,759





SEASON FUNDRAISING REVENUES
(in thousands)

Lotteries & Special Events	$	604
Individual Donations	$	820
Corporate	$	105
In-Kind advertising /products	$	5
Foundations & Other	$	262
VOF	$	1,009

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

VANCOUVER OPERA ASSOCIATION

Vancouver Opera Association ("VOA") is a registered charity with a mandate to produce professional presentations of opera at a high musical and theatrical standard for a wide audience. VOA ended the season with net revenue over expenses of $488K and increased its Net Assets to $183K.

Condensed Statement of Financial Position
(As at June 30, in thousands)

ASSETS	**2022**	**2021**
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 906	$ 1929
Restricted cash	193	226
Accounts receivable	659	911
Prepaid expenses	56	28
	$ 1,814	$3,094
Prepaid expenses	$ 2	$ 2
Other receivables	34	34
Capital assets	1,239	451
	$ 3,089	$3,581
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities		
Bank indebtedness	$ 29	$ 48
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	342	808
Loans payable	-	618
Deferred revenue and contributions	822	899
	$ 1,193	$2,373
Deferred lease liability	$ 70	-
Deferred capital contributions	1,644	1,513
	$ 2,907	$3,886
NET ASSETS		
Net assets invested in capital assets	$ 258	236
Net deficit	(75)	(541)
	183	(305)
	$ 3,090	$3,581

Condensed Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in net assets
For the year ended June 30 (in thousands)

REVENUES	**2022**	**2021**
Box office	$ 798	$ 103
Other earned revenues	272	116
Fundraising	1,799	1,972
Grants from the VOET	-	-
Grants from the VOF	1,009	-
Public sector grants	2,759	2,716
	$6,637	$ 4,907
EXPENSES		
Progamming	$3,150	$ 1,673
Fundraising	840	733
Marketing	623	477
General and administrative	776	801
Facilities	669	529
Net production write off	-	-
Amortization of capital assets	91	83
Loss on disposal of capital assets	-	-
	$6,149	$ 4,296
Excess of revenues over expenses	$ 488	$ 611
Net assets, beginning of year	$(305)	$ (916)
Net dassets, end of year	$ 183	$ (305)

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

VANCOUVER OPERA FOUNDATION

Vancouver Opera Foundation ("VOF") is a registered charity with the primary objective to solicit, hold and administer funds for the benefit of VOA. These funds are not included in the financial statements of the Vancouver Opera Association. VOF is the sole trustee of the Vancouver Opera Endowment Trust ("VOET"), which is an independent registered charity that supports VOA. The net assets, revenues and expenses of the VOET are not consolidated in the Foundation's financial statements. Net assets of the VOET at December 31, 2021 were Nil.

Condensed Statement of Financial Position
As at December 31 (in thousands)

ASSETS	**2021**	**2020**
Cash	$ 13	$ 9
Loans receivable	510	619
Investments	16,809	14,009
Other assets	7	4
	$17,339	$14,641
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES		
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities	$ 31	$ 8
Due to Vancouver Opera Association	509	-
Deferred contributions & investment income	1,955	1,241
Fund balance	14,844	13,392
	$17,339	$14,641

Condensed Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Fund Balance
For the year ended December 31 (in thousands)

REVENUES	**2021**	**2020**
Fundrasing and grants	$ 102	$ 217
Investment income	655	274
	$ 757	$ 491
EXPENSES		
Disbursements to VOA	$ 501	$ 200
Professional Fees	79	77
Scholarships and bursaries	44	(3)
Administration	9	1
	$ 633	$ 275
(Deficiency) excess of revenues over expenses before the following	$ 124	$ 216
Changes in fair value of investments	41	(10)
(Deficiency) excess of revenues over expenses	$ 165	$ 206
Fund balance, beginning of year	$13,392	$12,736
Change in fair value of endowment funds	1,120	284
External contribution to endowment funds	166	166
Fund balance, end of year	$14,843	$13,392

Full audited financial statements are available.
Please contact Jacqui Evans-Atkinson, CFO at jevans-atkinson@vancouveropera.ca

vancouveropera

Creating extraordinary experiences that
engage, inspire and entertain our community

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