VANCOUVER OPERA ANNOUNCES
THE SIX PARTICIPATING ARTISTS IN THE
2023-2024 YULANDA M. FARIS YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 27, 2023, VANCOUVER, B.C./ / Traditional territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations – Vancouver Opera is thrilled to welcome the participants of the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program for 2023–2024. Danlie Rae Acebuque, Simran Claire, Sawyer Craig, Heidi Duncan, Indra Egan, and Jeremy Scinocca will spend the next year working with Vancouver Opera as they receive mentorship and training through the annual education program.

“Our 2023-2024 participants are an exceptional group of artists who will work and train with world-class opera professionals this coming season,” says Tom Wright, Vancouver Opera General Director. “Participants in our Young Artists Program are provided with exciting live performance opportunities throughout the season whether it is for our community events or our large-scale productions.”

This residency program is a professional bridge program between formal educational programs and the professional opera world and provides singers, pianists and stage directors unique opportunities to train with industry leaders and receive hands-on experience. Made possible through a generous donations by the family of Yulanda M. Faris, artists receive one-on-one coaching, attend masterclasses and are provided performance opportunities where possible.

“At Vancouver Opera we strive to provide high-calibre training and mentorship alongside performance experience,” says Leslie Dala, Program Director. “The experience participants receive through our residence program is instrumental in preparing them for a successful professional career in opera.”

Annually, Vancouver Opera selects program participants who are poised to take their opera career to the next level. Those interested in the program are encouraged to visit Vancouver Opera’s website.

Participants in the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program for 2023–2024 are:

Danlie Rae Acebuque, Baritone



Filipino-Canadian baritone Danlie Rae Acebuque is described to "possess a beautiful, warm baritone voice with enviable flexibility and an easy top" (Claudia Friedlander), and "his fresh, suave baritone" (Opera Canada). Danlie Rae holds a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance and Masters of Music in Opera Performance at the University of Toronto under the tutelage of Frédérique Vézina.

Simran Claire, Mezzo-Soprano



Simran Claire is a mezzo-soprano from Surrey, BC. She is a graduate of Calgary Opera's McPhee Artist development program, performing as Flora in *La traviata* and the Teacher in *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*. An alumnus of UBC, the Glimmerglass Festival, The Banff Centre, and Pacific Opera Victoria's CEAR, Simran is also interested in creating original work. Her "utterly moving" (Opera Canada) narrative recital film *Dadima* was featured by CBC Music and Global TV.

Sawyer Craig, Director



Sawyer is a Canadian multidisciplinary artist with a passion for vibrant, collaborative storytelling. In demand as both singing actor and as stage director, she's been praised as a "bit of a renaissance woman" (UM Today). Onstage highlights: *Adina* (Highlands Opera Studio) and *Frasquita* (Edmonton Opera). Directing highlights: *Le Portrait de Manon* (VO YAP Showcase) and *Il Corsaro* (Manitoba Underground Opera). Sawyer is over the moon to return to the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artist Program as the stage director for the 2023-24 season.

Heidi Duncan, Soprano



Hailing from Calgary, Alberta, soprano Heidi Duncan is a recent graduate of The University of Toronto where she earned both her Bachelor's of Music in Voice Performance and Master's of Music in Opera Performance. Recent opera credits include Annina (*La Traviata*), Laurie Moss (*The Tender Land*), Berta (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Despina (*Così fan tutte*) and Madame Herz (*Der Schauspieldirektor*). As an avid recitalist, Heidi has performed solo recitals and concert programs in Toronto and across Alberta, including a soloist with the University of Toronto Wind Ensemble.

Indra Egan, Pianist



Northern BC-born pianist & vocal coach Indra Egan holds a M.Mus. (Collaborative Piano, U of T), where she won the Koldofsky Prize in Accompanying, and a B.Mus. (Piano Performance, U of M). Opera highlights: *Béatrice et Bénédict* (Opera Kelowna), Songbook XI (Tapestry Opera), *La Bohème* (Opera NUOVA), *Colas et Colinette* (Lyn Vernon Productions), and excerpts from *l'Orfeo* and *Lohengrin* (U of M Opera).

Jeremy Scinocca, Tenor



Jeremy Scinocca is an award-winning tenor from Toronto and a returning member of Vancouver Opera's Yulanda M. Farris Young Artist Program. Last season Jeremy performed in Vancouver Opera's *Le Portrait de Manon* as Tiberge and covered the roles of Nadir in *Les pêcheurs de perles* and Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This year Jeremy will make his role debut as Tonio in *La fille sans regiment* with Jeunesses Musicales Canada.

ABOUT THE YULANDA M. FARIS YOUNG ARTISTS PROGRAM

In 2012, Vancouver Opera launched the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program. Made possible through a gift from the family of Yulanda M. Faris, the program engages, enriches, mentors and trains rising young Canadian opera artists and offers a bridge between formal academic educational programs and the professional world in a supportive and encouraging environment. Led by Program Director, Leslie Dala and Principal Coach, Tina Chang with invited guest opera professionals providing exceptional mentorship with artists like Judith Forst OC OBC, Carol Isaac and Daniel Okulitch. The Young Artists Program provides singers, pianists, and stage directors the opportunity to train with industry leaders through master classes, one-on-one coaching and performance opportunities as part of a residency program.

ABOUT VANCOUVER OPERA

Vancouver Opera creates extraordinary experiences that engage, inspire and entertain through voice, music and theatre. Vancouver Opera is the second largest professional opera company in Canada and is regarded worldwide for its fine mainstage productions, country-leading education programs and innovative community programs. Learn more at www.vancouveropera.ca.

Vancouver Opera has the continuing support of The Canada Council for the Arts, Government of Canada, the BC Arts Council and BC Provincial Government, the City of Vancouver Cultural Services and Vancouver Civic Theatres. Vancouver Opera's season sponsors are BMO, Mission Hill Family Estate, and the Alan and Gwendoline Pyatt Foundation.

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