

LET'S MAKE OPERA! (LMO)
presented by the
HIGHLANDS OPERA COMMUNITY SCHOOL
fully supported by the
ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION
December 1st, 2024 – November 30th, 2025

***** INFORMATION MEETING, DECEMBER 2ND, 6:30-8:00PM *****
HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS MUSEUM, 66 MUSEUM ROAD,
HALIBURTON

Creating an opera takes a VILLAGE! Under the ongoing guidance of experienced professional mentors from Highlands Opera Studio specializing in the various areas of opera creation, **3-4 stories from Haliburton County will be chosen and accompanying creative teams from the county will be formed to bring those stories from an idea to a full opera production onstage in November 2025!**

We are bringing the creative process directly to Haliburton County for residents of all ages and demographics through hands-on activities that explore and implement every element of opera, from storytelling and composition, to performance and design... essentially to create an opera from scratch. The Italian word 'opera' simply means 'work'. An opera is a story told through singing with musical and/or sonic accompaniment and doesn't necessarily require professional singers and/or a symphony orchestra. This project will offer residents of Haliburton County, under the guidance of highly trained mentors specializing in the key areas of opera creation and presentation, the opportunity to write their own stories, create/compose their own music/sonic environment, try out the new pieces at the halfway point (workshop), design/build their own sets/costumes, learn about theatre lighting/production, and perform the completed works at the end of the year. The goal is to create 3 short operas (15-30 minutes each), telling stories of life experience from Haliburton County. There is space in this project for those with limited or no musical training. Opera is a fluid and welcoming art form with space for everyone from every sector of society and every possible background. We endeavour to represent and support diverse cultural and social perspectives and preferences, including LGBTQQIP2SAA, gender fluid, persons with disabilities, newcomers, and those with low SES, throughout the organization and in this project.

Please note this year long project is for amateur creators and performers who are looking for an exciting and rewarding creative experience that will bring YOUR stories and YOUR experiences to life on stage in an OPERA! We know everyone has busy and changeable schedules so the mentoring process will be fluid and arranged in collaboration with each creative team throughout the process. In addition to the four Lead Mentors who will be with the project throughout the year, there will be occasional 'classes' and 'Guest Mentors' invited to contribute guidance/expertise and provide support in different key areas of the creative process as needed. When/if these classes occur they will be arranged well in advance in collaboration with all involved and we will encourage all teams to attend.

What goes into creating an opera?

STAGE 1 - Words come first! (December '24 – January '25)

Story Telling/Oral Tradition: Stories can come from any source as long as the story is about Haliburton County or about a personal experience that took place in the region: eg. history; personal experiences/challenges in life, current or past; inspired by nature, ie. fantasy story.

Writing/Editing: Write the story down - less is more when it comes to number of words! - establish characters to 'live' your story - telling a story through poetry works well - editing ('distilling') your story.

****STORY SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 31, 2024****

Email your stories to valerie@highlandsoperastudio.com

The 3-4 stories chosen for the full project will be announced mid-January (date TBA)

STAGE 2 - Creating the musical accompaniment! (Feb. – March)

Composing/Creating the Music/Sonic Environment: Anyone with musical training/song writing experience in ANY style, this is for you! Even if you play an instrument but have never tried composition, we want to hear from you! - if you love music and have a sense of rhythm but can't read music, there's room for you too!

STAGE 3 - Add Performers (February – April '25)

Singers, Musicians, Music Director/Conductor: - **Singers:** If you can carry a tune and have a sense of rhythm in any style of music, we want you! Reading music is an advantage but might not be absolutely necessary for every project.

Musicians: ANY instrument can potentially be involved in this project. Reading music and being able to follow a conductor is an advantage. Please note, an 'orchestra' is not necessary! A vocal line can be supported by as little as one instrument.

Leaders/Conductors: if you play in a band and give starting cues to your group, you're a contender!

WORKSHOP #1 - mid to late April (dates & location TBD)

Each team will have a chance to perform their operas as far as they are at this point. The LMO Project Mentors will help guide and encourage each team to develop and, if necessary, revise their operas, so they're ready to move on to the next stage.

STAGE 4 - Add Production elements, ie. Stage Director, Designers (Costumes, Sets, Lighting: April – August)

Visual artists & Video designers/film makers, we need you! - Continue to refine, expand/shorten, revise, etc. words & music, ie. core story content and supporting production elements in consultation with LMO Project Mentors.

WORKSHOP #2: Add Stage Management (August, dates TBD)

Rehearse and perform operas in the NLPAP (TBC) with the added production elements, including Stage Management, and as many other pieces of the project as possible. - review performances in consultation with LMO Project Mentors.

STAGE 5: Time for the finishing touches! (August – November)

Continue to work on bringing your story to life onstage, ie. refine, expand, add additional production elements, etc. LMO Project Mentors will be available online and in person as needed throughout the entire creative process.

FINAL PERFORMANCES! - (location TBC; late November 2025, dates TBD)

Time to celebrate Haliburton County, the creative process, and bringing YOUR stories to life through OPERA!

The 'Let's Make Opera!' pilot project is being produced by the nationally registered charity, Highlands Opera Theatre, which operates publicly as Highlands Opera Studio and Highlands Opera Community School. This project is under the Highlands Opera Community School division and is being fully supported by an Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) Seed Grant.



LMO PROJECT CONTACTS:

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