



1. HOS 2018: 'The Glove', Andrew Erasmus 2. Richard Margison teaching 3. HOS 2024, 'Il barbiere di Siviglia', Patricia Yates, Queen Hezumuryango, Danlie Rae Acebuque 4. HOS 2017: Elizabeth Polese & Samuel Chan 5. HOS General Director & Stage Director, Valerie Kuinka, working with Cree composer, Andrew Balfour on 'Mishaabooz's Realm' 6. 'Mishaabooz's Realm', HOS '24, Andrew Balfour & Evan Lindberg 7. Richard Margison, O.C., Artistic Director/Master Vocal Teacher 8. HOS 2019, 'Ariadne auf Naxos', Sunny Shams, Daevyd Pepper, Jacob Feldman

HIGHLANDS OPERA STUDIO

VALERIE KUINKA
General & Co-Artistic Director

RICHARD MARGISON
Co-Artistic Director

WHAT IS HIGHLANDS OPERA STUDIO?

Operating out of Haliburton, Ontario, since its creation in 2007, Highlands Opera Studio (produced by Highlands Opera Theatre, a not-for-profit nationally registered charity) is a professional performing arts organization for emerging operatic artists. An intensive advanced summer professional training program and professional development resource to assist singers, pianists, and composers make the transition into the professional world, the focus is not only on performance and production excellence, but on top level coaching and professional development/networking with the goal of expanding employment opportunities both nationally and internationally. Established opera professionals (international artist agents, vocal coaches, casting directors, etc.) are invited to interact with and advise our participants during the intensive 4-5 week July/August season, resulting in new connections, many leading to employment and/or artist representation (national and international).

Core summer activities also include 16-19 live public events/ performances: multiple performances of fully staged operas, public masterclasses, concerts (including operatic, musical theatre, and Art Song repertoire), and multiple free community events. In addition to the summer opera intensive, Highlands Opera Theatre also operates the Highlands Opera Community School running year round where residents of Haliburton County can receive subsidized lessons, participate in various opera-centred educational programs, and interact with the visiting emerging professionals of the main program in the summer.

WHY SHOULD I SUPPORT HIGHLANDS OPERA STUDIO?

"Without a doubt, [Highlands Opera Studio attracts] the absolute highest standard of emerging operatic professional. This program offers a uniquely supportive environment allowing for the greatest results." – *John Fisher, Master Vocal Coach, Former Director of Music Administration, Metropolitan Opera, New York, NY*

"It is a joy to work with the exceptional talents you have chosen, and to be part of your vision for these young professional artists. This program is unlike others I have worked for and puts the needs of the artists first." – *Anthony Manoli, Master Vocal Coach & Collaborative Pianist, (Coach and primary concert collaborator of soprano, Sondra Radvanovsky), New York, NY*

"In my role as Director of Corporate Donations for BMO Financial Group, I supported Highlands Opera Studio for over 15 years until my retirement in 2023. I have known and respected Richard and Valerie for over 25 years through their respective careers and previous initiatives, and know them to be visionary, and fiscally responsible. Highlands Opera Studio offers something truly unique in Canada and is extremely worthy of financial support." – *Nada Ristich, Former Director, Corporate Donations & Community Giving, BMO Financial Group, 100 King Street West, Toronto, Ontario*

"Highlands Opera Studio was an extremely enriching experience that challenged me and excited me unlike any other summer music program. I especially appreciated the opportunity to meet and sing for agents that have been in the classical music business for decades because it offered me a fresh perspective of the industry and what I could expect from it." – *Queen Hezumuryango, Mezzo-Soprano, Toronto & Montreal (HOS '22-'24)*

"My time with Highlands Opera Studio was an invaluable asset in the early stages of my development, as well as in the launching of my professional career. The summers I spent at HOS helped shape my technique and build my confidence as an artist, and gave me the resources needed to step into my own as a performer. The many successes of this program are thanks to the dynamic duo of Valerie Kuinka and Richard Margison, who give all they have to the resident artists each summer, and who have created a second home in the Highlands for so many of us." – *River Guard, Tenor, Hamilton, Ontario (HOS '18, '21, '22)*

"I found Highlands Opera Studio to be extremely valuable. We had the opportunity to work with and spend time with the best singers, teachers, and agents who were working internationally, and learn from them what is required to have a long and fulfilling career." – *Miriam Khalil, soprano, HOS 2009*

"My experience at HOS was incredibly important and working with Richard [Margison] was life changing....a crucial step in my continuing development as an opera singer. The team of mentors they assemble is first rate." – *Adam Luther, tenor, HOS 2013*

"The opportunity to work with Highlands Opera Studio on the Indigenous chamber opera, *Mishaabooz's Realm*, in 2017 and again in 2024 has been one of the most enriching and powerful commissions of my career. From the very beginning, the creative atmosphere was respectful and collaborative which resulted in a healthy and innovative process that celebrated and explored the rich and challenging history of Indigenous people on Turtle Island." – *Andrew Balfour, Cree First Nation composer, Winnipeg & Toronto*

HOW ARE THE PARTICIPANTS CHOSEN?

The Opera Studio participants are chosen from across Canada and internationally through a rigorous competitive audition process that takes place annually in January/February. The approximately 15-17 participants, once chosen out of the pool of 125 (on average) annual applicants, attend the program **FREE OF CHARGE** (Canadian citizens and landed immigrants) including accommodation, meals, and all professional training/development resources.

The successful candidates are divided into three divisions within the program: Apprentice (19-25 years of age), Professional (no age limit), and Independent Study (no age limit). Members of the Apprentice Division are usually cast as covers and chorus. The Professional Division are cast in lead roles. The Independent Study Division is available for a very select number of highly qualified applicants (singers & composers) who are invited to submit a proposal to use the professional resources to follow a personal project (eg. new role study, new opera creation/workshop, recital preparation, competition or audition tour preparation, etc.). All participants in every division participate in all training and professional development activities and opportunities.

Highlands Opera Studio endeavours to offer an empowering professional and yet restorative environment in which to build on and reinforce skills introduced during the year.



HOS 2017: 'Mishaabooz's Realm', Nathan Keoughan, Kevin Deer, Lauren Margison

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY AND HELP BUILD FOR THE FUTURE!

Experiencing in live performance the power and beauty of the unamplified trained human singing voice at its best can stir deep emotion and change the world.

“The art form [of opera] when done right...takes the breath away, moves the human heart, soul, and spirit, and creates excitement like no other.”

– mezzo-soprano Alice Cooté

HOS has grown steadily since 2007, from a 3-week program with 7 participants, to a 4-5-week program with 15-20 participants and the same number of staff and professional consultants. The company has been guided fiscally and artistically throughout this time by the General and Co-Artistic Directors, Valerie Kuinka and Richard Margison, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, and the Accounting/General Management Personnel of Highlands Opera Theatre. HOS has never run a deficit and has maintained balanced financial statements since 2007.

ALL SUCCESSFUL CANADIAN PARTICIPANTS ATTEND THE 4-5 WEEK PROGRAM FREE OF CHARGE. THE COST TO HIGHLANDS OPERA STUDIO IS APPROXIMATELY \$14,000 PER PARTICIPANT. This covers ALL PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT, ACCOMMODATION, and 2 meals a day, 6 days a week.

Fundraising is an ongoing and primary concern, and is an annual challenge.

The majority of funding has come from the private sector, including occasional individual corporate donations and previous multi-year support from BMO Financial Group, government support (Ontario Arts Council Opera Project grants, Ontario Trillium Foundation, EODP (2015-2018), Canada Summer Jobs, Haliburton County Development Corporation (HCDC)), private foundations (Azrieli Foundation, RBC Foundation, Good Foundation), fundraising events, individual donations, and revenue generated by ticket sales. In 2017 we received funding from Canada Council New Chapter and Canadian Heritage: Canada 150 Fund supporting the creation and presentation of ‘Mishaabooz’s Realm/Le Royaume de Michabous’, by Cree First Nation composer and librettist, Andrew Balfour. This new opera creation and presentation was in partnership with l’Atelier lyrique de l’Opéra de Montréal and was presented again during the 2024 summer season. Since 2007, we have received and continue to build strong support and commitment from Haliburton County through a strong volunteer base and community collaboration.

Highlands Opera Studio has been operating successfully since 2007, and has established the reputation of providing interactive, intimate opera of the highest calibre. Our professional development program has established an international reputation for providing the highest level of professional training, development, and performance experience including the opportunity to perform important standard repertoire while receiving relevant professional feedback from exceptional international opera industry leaders. We are extremely committed to the creation and performance of new and existing Canadian works along with standard operatic repertoire which is still important to the development of emerging professional operatic artists and interesting to our audiences. In 2017, Art Song was also introduced as a specialized area of study for singers and collaborative pianists within the Independent Study Division. Creating a balance between what is important to the emerging professionals and keeping our audiences excited and engaged is at the core of our ongoing goals.



1. 'Il barbiere di Siviglia', HOS '24, Nicholas Murphy, Benjamin Wallace
2. John Fisher working with Andrew Love, HOS 2010
3. HOS '23: 'Elisir d'amore', Samira Tou, Elias Theocharidis, Gabrielle Côté-Picard, Amanda Weatherall
4. HOS '21, 'Music on the Water', Stéphane Mayer, Lauren Margison, River Guard
5. HOS 2024: 'Mishaabooz's Realm', Rebecca Gray
6. 'Eugene Onegin', HOS '22, Jonelle Sills & Micah Schroeder
7. HOS 2017: 'Mishaabooz's Realm', Lauren Margison & chorus



1. HOS '23: Vlad Soloviev & Queen Hezumuryango in concert 2. HOS 2017: 'Cosi fan tutte', Nathan Keoughan, Caroline Gélinas, Elizabeth Polese, Mathieu Abel, Lauren Margison, Max Van Wyck 3. HOS 2018: The Troublemaker, David Diston & Suzanne Taffot 4. 'Leporello Diaries' (abridged version of 'Don Giovanni'), HOS '21, Brenden Friesen & Geoffrey Schellenberg 5. HOS 2018, 'La Bohème', Sebastian Haboczki, Bruno Roy, David Diston, Brenden Friesen, with celebrity guest performer, Richard Margison 6. HOS 2011, 'Falstaff', Tracy Cantin 7. HOS '22: Nathalie Doucet, master coach 8. HOS 2016: Combat classes 9. HOS 2017: relaxing with Chantal Lambert & Andrew Balfour 10. HOS 2018: 'The Glove', Melissa McCann & Matthew Dalen

Our work at Highlands Opera Studio focuses on the power and beauty of singing,
and it's ability to express and touch the human spirit.

WE HOPE YOU WILL CONSIDER SUPPORTING US! FEEL THE PASSION! GET INVOLVED!

www.highlandsoperastudio.com | Info and Administration: 1-855-455-5533

Highlands Opera Studio is operated by Highlands Opera Theatre, a not-for-profit nationally registered charity. Donations are gratefully accepted and can be made online at www.highlandsoperastudio.com by clicking on the DONATE link, or by cheque. Please make cheques payable to HIGHLANDS OPERA THEATRE and mail to P.O. Box 1440, Haliburton, Ontario, K0M 1S0. Tax receipts will be issued at the beginning of the year, or immediately if made through the Canada Helps link on the HOS website. ALL DONATIONS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED PUBLICLY. Charitable Reg. # 822457263RR0001.

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