

To our Lowbrow Fans, Supporters, and Performers,

As we conclude our 2022-23 season, we want to extend a big, heartfelt thank you for what was a truly incredible year of growth and opportunities for Lowbrow Opera Collective. With your support, we were able to bring in a plethora of new and familiar artists to the stage, including performers from across the country! As we continue to expand our efforts, we remain forever grateful for our network of folks who continue to support our efforts financially, artistically, and emotionally. We continue to thrive due to your love and generosity - thank you!



In a season of firsts, there were many new and exciting opportunities Lowbrow welcomed this year. We executed our first community-building and development event with *Indelible: reflections on queerness in the performing arts*, very much thanks to our incredible Director of Development Trevor Ainge! This exciting event consisted of a short recital featuring music by local composer Erika Meyer, performed by some of our beloved board members, as well as an earnest discussion centered on queer representation in the performing arts, moderated by co-founder and Vice President Kate Kelley. We are incredibly grateful to our panelists Dean Williamson, music director of Nashville Opera, Miriam Anderson, Artistic Director of Puget Sound Works, and Stephanie Clare, Associate Professor of English at the University of Washington, each of whom brought a wealth of insight and wisdom to what was a wonderfully profound discussion.

Indelible was a precursor for our spring production, *more than friends: a triptych on queer love through the ages*, which featured three explicitly queer operas, none of which had ever been performed live with full staging before. *Thirst*, composition by TJ Rubin and libretto by Laura Barati, featured two singers new to Lowbrow, Karen Dunstan and Cee Adamson, who portrayed a magical exploration of the tensions in a modern, queer relationship under the direction of Molly Anders, who is also new to Lowbrow. Moving back in time, we explored the ancient and well-known love story of *Achilles & Patroclus*, composition by Erika Meyer and libretto by James Theodore Washburn. First featured as part of Seattle Opera's Creation Lab, Jae Bernado, Eric Jeffords, Revere Taylor, and Robin Wyatt-Stone brought this tragic love story to life in a double-cast format under the direction of Kate Kelley. To close out the triptych, we presented something very different than what we have done before - *Emily and Sue*, an a cappella pop opera with composition by Dana Kaufman and libretto by Aiden K. Feltkamp, featured New Yorker Kirby Burgess as Emily Dickinson, backed by a quartet comprised of soprano Christine Oshiki (who also played Emily's sister-in-law and lover, Sue), tenor Eric Jeffords, bass Robin Wyatt-Stone, and percussionist Haley Posey. This work was co-directed by returning Lowbrow performer and director Eliza Woodyard along with Ashley Biehl, who made their directorial debut with us. Using excerpts from Dickinson's poems and letters between herself and Sue, this popera explores another historic queer relationship that has been misrepresented by historians as simply "a close friendship". The run of *more than friends* was a huge success - we sold out 5 out of 8 performance dates and definitely left the people wanting more!

Growing publicity was another large part of success this season. Leading up to the opening of *more than friends*, we were approached by Gemma Alexander with The Seattle Times who asked to interview co-founder and our Board President, Christine Oshiki, and co-director for *Emily and Sue*, Eliza Woodyard, to learn more about Lowbrow as an organization as well as what *more than friends* was all about. This was our [first interview](#) with a major news outlet, and we are so proud and excited to have Lowbrow's mission shared with even more people. *More than friends* was also featured in another [Times' article](#) listing top Staff Picks of Pride events in Seattle for 2023. In addition, Lowbrow Opera Collective became a [National Finalist for The American Prize in the Professional Division](#) for last season's production of *#adulthood2: here we go again*. We've also been approached by other local organizations who are eager to find ways to collaborate with us - stay tuned for more details on this!

What an incredible year it has been, and so much of it is thanks to you. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for continued support, for helping us sell out shows, for sharing social media posts, for telling your friends and strangers at the bar about us - you are the heart and soul of Lowbrow Opera Collective. Keep an ear out for some exciting news from us, and we look forward to seeing you next season for *Sweets* by Kate!

Christine Oshiki
LOC Board President

Kate Kelley
LOC Board Vice President