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Canadian Children's Opera Company and St James Town Children's Choir Appear in Benefit Holiday Concert

On Friday, December 13 at 7:00pm, the *Canadian Children's Opera Company* (CCOC) will join forces with the *St. James Town Children's Choir* (SJTCC) to present a holiday concert at St. Peter's Anglican Church (188 Carlton St). Admission is free, but donations of non-perishable food items for the St. Luke's food bank will be collected at the door. The performers, aged 6-19 will include children and youth from the CCOC, the SJTCC, and the CCOC's outreach arm, OPERAtion KIDS.

The seeds for the concert were planted when Reaching out Through Music founder John Loosemore gave a recording of an SJTCC performance to CCOC Artistic Director Ann Cooper Gay. "I was very impressed by the quality of what they were doing," says Ms Cooper Gay, "and I knew right then that I wanted to find a way to collaborate with them." The opportunity came later that year, when the CCOC secured funding for their OPERAtion KIDS program and began looking for a community partner for a holiday outreach performance. "Opera isn't about elitism any more," says Cooper Gay. "At its heart, opera is really about bringing together different art forms, and different artists. And it's about bringing together communities, too. It's about collaboration at every level."

The **Canadian Children's Opera Company** was founded in 1968 and is the only permanent children's opera company in Canada. The company regularly develops, commissions, and produces new operas for performance by children. The Principal Chorus performs with the Canadian Opera Company, as well as collaborating with leading arts organizations including the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, Luminato Festival, and Soundstreams Canada. The CCOC has also recorded five albums, and has been broadcast on CBC Radio 2. Their latest recording, the Juno-nominated *A Midwinter Night's Dream*, was released on the Centrediscs label, and features the CCOC-commissioned opera of the same name by Harry Somers. On their most recent international tour, the company won Second Place at the prestigious Summa Cum Laude Festival in Vienna, Austria. The company has two upcoming opera commissions: *East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon*, by Norbert Palej and K.T. Bryski is based on the Norwegian folk tale, and will premiere at Harbourfront Centre in May 2014. *Alice's Wonderland* [working title], by Errol Gay and Michael Patrick Albano is based on Lewis Carroll's famous children's works, and will premiere in spring 2015. The CCOC's outreach activities are made possible by the financial support of BMO Financial Group, the Toronto Arts Council, and the Minstrel Foundation

Founded in Toronto in 2007, *Reaching Out Through Music* is a unique approach to community building. Through the universal language of music, *Reaching Out Through Music* provides musical and social opportunities for children in one of North America's most densely populated and ethnically diverse urban communities, St. James Town, in the heart of downtown Toronto. The organization operates the **St. James Town Children's Choir**, directed by Diane Jamieson and Sanela Konjhodzic, and provides instrumental instruction in piano, violin, guitar and clarinet from a number of locations in St. James Town, including St. Peter's Anglican Church.

CCOC Photo Gallery: http://www.canadianchildrensopera.com/photo_album.php

Reaching Out Through Music: <http://reachingoutthroughmusic.org/>

St James Town Children's Choir:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.571318359595506.1073741829.333139960080015&type=3>

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