



Filumena is the story of an Italian immigrant woman in Southern Alberta's Crowsnest Pass area and her real-life epic during the prohibition years.



FILU PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS
THE EDMONTON OPERA
PRODUCTION OF
FILUMENA



The combined efforts of two men, composer John Estacio and librettist John Murrell led to the creation of the Opera *Filumena*. It is the story of an Italian immigrant woman from Southern Alberta's Crowsnest Pass area and the real life epic she lived during her brief years on this earth.



Florence (Filumena) Costanzo, who would later have the family name of Lassandro, was born in southern Italy at the beginning of the twentieth century and immigrated to Canada with her parents. At fifteen she was given in marriage to Charles (Charlie) Lassandro, a man almost ten years her senior. Charlie was the partner of Emilio Picariello, better known as Emperor 'Pic' a powerful, charismatic man who ran bootlegging business during the Prohibition years in Alberta.



Being a family business, Filumena and Pic's son Steve were also involved. During one of the rum running escapades Steve was shot. Upon hearing this news Pic and Filumena paid a visit to Constable Lawson the police officer responsible. There was a struggle and Lawson was killed.



Both Pic and Filumena were arrested and charged. Filumena was persuaded to take sole blame for the murder. It was felt that no woman would be convicted of capital murder; and that even if she were the sentence of execution would be commuted to one of imprisonment. Both Pic and Filumena were convicted of capital murder and sentenced to hang. After several months of appeals clemency was not granted. In 1923 at age 22 she was sent to the gallows in Fort Saskatchewan Alberta, near Edmonton, immediately after Pic.

FILUMENA was broadcasted on CBC Television's Opening Night March 9th, 2006 at 8:00 pm.





Filumena: An Opera for All of Canada

Edmonton (AB) – Watch our history unfold onstage and on screen with Edmonton Opera's performance of *Filumena*, March 9, 2006, at 8pm on CBC Television's Opening Night.

John Estacio and John Murrell's premiere grand Canadian Opera was created for all. From the seasoned aficionado to the newcomer. It has all the elements of a classic; a tale of innocence, passion, and tragedy combined with a rich, sophisticated score; substantial cast and chorus; a set by one of Canada's foremost stage designers Sue Lepage; lighting design by Harry Frehner; and stage direction by Kelly Robinson whose award winning works include theatre, opera and film.

Filumena recounts the tragic tale of Florence (Filumena) Lassandro, a young Italian immigrant living in Alberta's Crowsnest Pass region. Forced into a loveless marriage and drawn into a bootlegging scheme, Filumena is ultimately implicated, along with Emilio Picariello, in the murder of Police Constable Stephen O. Lawson. To this day, no one is sure who fired the fatal shot. After a sensational trial that drew national media attention, she was sent to the gallows at the age of 22, immediately after Picariello.

Filu Productions' Edmonton area producers, Jean Patenaude and Pati Olson, The Edmonton Opera Association, *Filumena* librettist John Murrell, *Filumena* composer John Estacio, members from the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Laura Whalen as Filumena and Gaétan Laperrière as Picariello, bring this opera to national Television. Taking the Performance from the Edmonton stage to television screens across Canada is director Eric Till who holds extensive international film credit and has directed and produced numerous ballets, dramas, and miniseries for television, including the widely acclaimed *The National Dream*.

Filumena was produced in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, with the Participation of the Canadian Television Fund (CTF: License Fee Program and Telefilm Canada: Equity Investment Program), CanWest Western Independent Producers Fund, Alberta Film Development Program of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Government of Canada Film or Video Production Tax Credit Program.

Filumena, March 9, 2006, at 8pm on CBC Television's Opening Night.

The Opera 'FILUMENA'
A two-hour variety & performing arts special



"She seemed strong and independent at a time in history when it seemed so unlikely that a young immigrant woman could be strong and independent and acting under her own guidance rather than peer pressure."

John Murrell

"I knew who these people were, these were people of the earth... these characters were in my life people that I grew up with. People who are new to Canada are excited and afraid at the same time."

John Estacio

The combined efforts of two men, composer John Estacio and librettist John Murrell led to the creation of the Opera 'Filumena'. It is the story of an Italian immigrant woman from the Crowsnest Pass area and the real life epic she lived during her brief years on this earth. Florence Costanzo/Lassandro (Filumena) was born in southern Italy at the turn of the twentieth century. She immigrated to Canada with her parents and at fifteen was given in marriage to an older man. She worked with her husband's friend and partner Emillio Picariello(Pic) - a powerful, charismatic man who ran a bootlegging business during the Prohibition years in Alberta. In this time of gangsters and rum running, Pic's son was shot during one of the runs. Filumena and Pic went to see the policeman responsible for harming his son, there was a struggle and the policeman was killed. Pic convinced Filumena to take the blame for the murder because he believed a woman would not be given a death sentence in Alberta. He was wrong. At the age of almost 23, Filumena was hung immediately after Pic in a small jail in Fort Saskatchewan.

The re-telling of this page in Alberta's history will show that freedom is something universal, but when all is said and done it is also something very personal. "Filumena" is a very personal story of life in Western Canada... a unique Canadian story. It is an exceptional true-life story of passion and pathos exalted in an Opera about Canadians – by Canadians – for Canadians.

BACKSTAGE:

Producer Jean Patenaude met up behind the scenes with his former *music for television* mentor and long time colleague Armand Baril during the opening performance of Filumena in Edmonton November 26, 2005. Armand produced the opera *Jules Massenet's "Manon"* in Edmonton in 1980 for CBC Television. Sunday November 27th was also Grey Cup day so producers Pati Olson and Jean Patenaude had the additional challenge of making sure the crew and cast didn't miss too much of the *game* on television during Filumena's recording. Edmonton Eskimos won the Grey Cup of course.

The whole recording experience of Filumena was an easy blend of mixing two artistic groups theatre and television. It turned out to be everybody's baby and all wanted to see it walk.

Key Elements:

Audience: Family
Format: Digital beta 16x9
Duration: 1 hour 48 minutes
Opera: Librettist – John Murrell
Composer- John Estacio

Key Creative:

Producers: Jean Patenaude & Pati Olson
Director: Eric Till
Music Consultant: David Hoyt
Sound Supervisor: Jochen Eggert

Marketing & Promotion Strategy:

- Broadcast Distribution to Canadian and International audiences
- Non-theatrical educational sales through traditional & performance arts schools & libraries

For further information, contact us at: info@SharingVisionsReveries.com



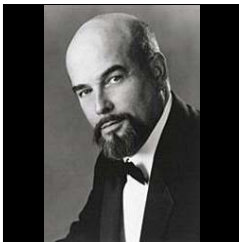
***The Edmonton Opera Company &
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra***

In November 2005 in the rejuvenated Jubilee Auditorium *The Edmonton Opera* opened its 43rd season with the opera '*Filumena*'. The opera company is recognized as a leader in the production and promotion of innovative, challenging, audience-driven opera for the residents of Northern Alberta and beyond. *The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra* since its establishment in 1952 has taken its place as one of Canada's foremost orchestral ensembles. Musicians of the ESO have provided music for the Edmonton Opera performances since 1963.



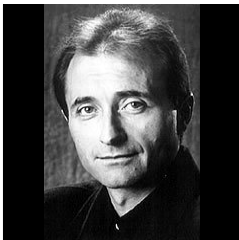
Laura Whalen, 'Filumena'

In a short span of time, Laura Whalen an Alberta native has made her mark as a lyric soprano whose performances are notable for beauty of tone and musical finesse. Internationally she toured Vienna, Salzburg, and Prague, singing Mozart's Exultate Jubilate, with the Prague State Symphony Orchestra. She's also performed with the Pacific Opera Victoria, the Opera Ontario with engagements in Tampa and Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto, Vancouver, Thunder Bay and London.



Gaétan Laperrière, 'Picariello'

Gaétan Laperrière, one of Canada's greatest classical artists, continues to command the attention of leading opera companies from around the world. He has performed the title role of Rigoletto at the Calgary Opera, Opera-Theatre de Metz in France, Opera-Theatre de Rennes France and the New York City Opera. Mr Laperrière has also appeared with the Florida Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Arizona Opera, Montreal Opera and the Boston Lyric Opera. Recently he performed the role of Count di Luna in the 1657 Paris version of Verdi's Trouvère, as a guest soloist at the Festival international de Lanaudière in Québec.



Kelly Robinson, Stage Director

Kelly Robinson's career spans theatre, opera, and film. His award winning work as a director and choreographer has been seen at, among others, the National Arts Centre (Ottawa), CanStage (Toronto), the Stratford and the Shaw Festivals (Canada), the Palace Theatre (New York), The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre and the West End (London), as well as the opera companies of Vancouver, Portland, Dallas, Edmonton, Calgary, Manitoba and Minnesota. Film and Television credits include choreography for Columbia Pictures, CBC, NBC, and ABC Television.



Sue Lepage, Set & Costume Design

Sue Lepage is well known for designing new work, including original productions such as *Zadie's Shoes*, *The four Lives of Marie*, *Lion in The Streets*, *Salt-Water Moon*, The musical *Emily*, and the operas *Crazy to Kill* and *Serinetta*. She has also designed productions for the Stratford and Shaw Festivals along with others at the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto.



Harry Frehner, Lighting Designer

Since 2002, Harry Frehner has been lighting designer on several exciting projects including *Requiem 9/11* in Ottawa, a new version of *Salome* for Arizona Opera and the world premiere of *Filumena* in early 2003 with Calgary Opera and the Banff Centre.



John Murrell, *Librettist*

Renowned nationally and internationally, John Murrell is one of the most frequently produced of all Canadian playwrights, as well as a highly respected arts advocate, mentor, and consultant. John Murrell has received the coveted Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts. He also was presented with the Alberta Order of Excellence, and, in 2003, was appointed an officer of the Order of Canada. Since November 1999, John Murrell has been Artistic Director/Executive Producer of Theatre Arts at the Banff Centre. *Filumena* is his first Opera as Librettist and a second opera is being created in 2005.



John Estacio, *Composer*

John Estacio has been Resident Music Composer with the Banff Centre, The Calgary Opera. In past years he's also been in residence with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and Pro Coro Canada. In addition to composing works for these organizations, he has written for the Vancouver Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and the Penderecki String Quartet. His first opera *Filumena*, the result of two enjoyable years of collaboration with librettist John Murrell, received its world premiere in Calgary in February 2003. A second Opera with Librettist John Murrell is being created.



Eric Till, *Director*

As a Director of Film and television, Eric Till received the 2004 Governor General Performing Award. He's recognized as a brilliant and passionate artist whose early productions for the Festival Series became the first CBC productions to contend for International Emmy Awards. Arriving in Canada in 1954 from England where he was born and educated and also produced numerous programs of English music and biographies of British composers, which led to his appointment at the BBC music department. He has directed/produced ballet programs on television for the Royal Ballet, the Bolshoi Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and such acclaimed miniseries as *The National Dream*, *Glory Enough for All*, *To Catch a Killer* and *the Newcomers*.



David L. Hoyt, *Music Consultant*

Former resident Conductor, Artistic Director and French Horn player with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra for many years, David was also Director of Sound and Music at the Banff Centre for the Arts. Born in Western Canada David L. Hoyt began his musical studies as a pianist and earned an Honours Degree in Musicology from the University of Alberta. He believes that Classical music must come closer to the people or it will become like art work in a museum, visited only once in a while. He also thinks that Music must breathe and grow. It does this by being interpreted in different ways by people from all walks of life. David L. Hoyt has done extensive musical arrangements for youth concerts in the Symphony for Kids and Education presentation of classical music.

Jean Patenaude, Producer, Writer, Director

Jean Patenaude spent twenty years as host/interviewer on radio/TV, including a decade as a television producer of documentaries, music, news and public affairs for Société Radio-Canada, before founding **Sharing Visions/Rêveries Inc.** He has produced television programs with the Banff Youth Orchestra Festival (CBC/Radio-Canada) and the French version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream on Ice* (LeBouthillier). Since producing his award winning arts documentary *Sharing Visions / Rêveries*, he has completed the one hour documentaries *Hats Off!*, *Music in the Wild* and *Music For a New World*. All four have aired on television in Canada in both French and English. Jean is also in the initial stages of producing with Georges Payrastré of Vancouver "Part II of Music for a New World" and on a dance project "Danceaupluriel" with Pati Olson.



Pati Olson, Producer, Writer, Project Supervisor

Since the early 1970's, Pati Olson has worked in western Canada as production coordinator, manager, and accountant on a variety of film and television projects. She moved to producing; '*Full Motion Fitness*' a Tai Chi series for broadcast in Canada & Australia; executive producer of "*Stories From the Seventh Fire*" an award winning Aboriginal mini series; an award winning animated special '*Two Winters*' for APTN & A-Channel; and documentaries for Global & CTV. Pati is in production on the doc '*Adventurous Souls & Roughmade Boots*' and in early development on '*Last Stop*' a docu-drama series and '*Snow People*' an animation pilot.

Michel Ouellette, Director of Photography

Mike Ouellette has experience as director and DOP in documentaries broadcast on TSN, CTV, CBC, Radio Canada, Discovery Channel, ACCESS and the NFB. *The Tourist* comedy/travel series won 1999 AMPIA Award for Best Informational, and the Bronze Plaque Award at the 2000 Columbus International Film & Video Festival. His work in commercials and sponsored productions won many ACE, AMPIA and CINDY awards; the *Edmonton 2001* film for that city's World Championship in Athletics bid won gold CINDY, SUMMIT and ACE awards and was finalist in the 1998 New York Film Festival. Mike has produced award-winning music videos with artists - Grace Under Pressure, Jump Orchestra, the smalls, EarthTONES, One Horse Blue, Johner Brothers, Duane Steele and Joan Kennedy.



Jochen Eggert, Television Sound Supervisor Recording/Editing

Jochen hails from Germany where he earned a Tonmeister Diploma at the Northwest German Music Academy in Detmold. After six years in West Berlin, working on film and TV projects in a private studio, he moved to Canada. In 1983 Jochen joined CBC Edmonton's Music Department and since 1997 was responsible for all classical music from Edmonton on national radio airwaves. Currently he splits his time between CBC and the Richard Eaton Singers as General Manager.

Al Lamden, Sound Recording/Editing

John Alan Lamden spent over thirty years at CBC Edmonton as senior audio engineer working on drama, classical music and variety programs. During his career with CBC and Edmonton Variety he produced over three dozen LPs and CDs for in-house and commercial release. He has received two Juno Awards and numerous Canada Music Council Awards. Currently he does private and contract audio engineering work on music, variety and sporting events.



Ron Yachimec, Music Recording Engineer

Ron Yachimec is a music recording engineer with CBC Radio in Edmonton. He has also worked as an independent engineer for the last 25 years, with emphasis on classical and acoustic music.