

Sue Elliott BIOGRAPHIES, September 2023

[499 Words]

One of North America's most innovative arts leaders, Sue Elliott has revolutionized the cultural service that performing and visual arts organizations provide. Through locally-relevant and internationally-renowned work that increases revenue and builds public value, hundreds of thousands of people have engaged in traditional and non-traditional performances and programs.

Sue comes to Calgary Opera from Norman Rockwell Museum, where she transformed the ways in which the Museum connects with and engages its audiences, online and in person, as its first-ever Chief Audience Officer.

Prior to joining NRM, Sue was inaugural Director of the Boston Symphony's Tanglewood Learning Institute and the Linde Center for Music and Learning. Through in-person and online programming, TLI refreshed the BSO's relationship with loyal audiences while diversifying programming to engage new participants. Under her artistic direction, TLI featured Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Tom Stoppard, Madeleine K. Albright, Tony Kushner, Joy Harjo, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Bill T. Jones, and hundreds of other artists and scholars. She also developed collaborations with organizations including Martha Graham Dance Company, the Lobkowitz Collections, Jacob's Pillow, and Berkshire International Film Festival.

Sue led the world's first online professional development, certificate, and accreditation program for private teachers at all stages of their careers at the Royal Conservatory of Music. Through this community of practice, thousands of teachers from around the world now call the Conservatory their partner in lifelong learning.

At Seattle Opera, Sue redesigned the company's programs, tripled annual events and participants, increased revenues, and established the case for their new headquarters. She commissioned its first community-inspired new work, *An American Dream*, and the *Our Earth* trilogy for schools and families. Sue also produced the company's most profitable Ring Cycle Festival. A popular music lecturer at home and abroad, she co-hosted *Saturday Night Opera* on Classical King FM and served on the advisory boards of ArtsEd Washington, University of Washington School of Music, King FM, Seattle Science Festival, and OPERA America.

Prior to her tenure in the Pacific Northwest, Sue spent 10 years at Houston Grand Opera. There, she created the award-winning *Song of Houston* initiative, pairing commissions from Christopher Theofanidis, Huang Ruo, Jake Heggie, Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, and Jose "Pepe" Martínez with groundbreaking education and community projects. Through its 20+ new works—including *The Refuge*; *Now & Then: the blues*; the *East + West* chamber opera series; and the world's first mariachi opera—*Song of Houston* has engaged more than 100 organizations and 500,000 people. Sue started at HGO as a stage manager, having served in that capacity at the Canadian Opera Company, San Diego Opera, Arizona Opera, and

Glimmerglass Opera. She was the first Canadian recipient of an OPERA America fellowship in Production and Stage Management.

An accomplished clarinetist and pianist, Sue holds a Master of Music Performance degree from the University of Southern California, an Artist Diploma from the University of Toronto, and a Bachelor of Music Performance degree from McGill University, alongside certificates from UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business and University of Pennsylvania's Center for Social Impact Strategy.

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One of North America's most innovative arts leaders, Sue Elliott comes to Calgary Opera from Norman Rockwell Museum, where she served as its first-ever Chief Audience Officer.

Prior to joining the Museum, Sue was inaugural Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Tanglewood Learning Institute and Linde Center for Music and Learning. She also launched and led the world's first online professional development, certificate, and accreditation program for private music teachers at the Royal Conservatory of Music; transformed public programming and partnerships at Seattle Opera, and created Houston Grand Opera's Song of Houston commissioning and community engagement initiative.

A popular music lecturer at home and abroad, she co-hosted Saturday Night Opera broadcasts on Classical King FM and served as an advisory board member for ArtsEd Washington, University of Washington School of Music, King FM, Seattle Science Festival, OPERA America, World Refugee Day, and Hobby Center's Uniquely Houston.

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Sue Elliott PRESS QUOTES, September 2023

"Elliott brings to the job not only a lot of ideas but also a lot of hard data about why people do and don't attend performances. In a career that's led her from the Houston Grand Opera to the Seattle Opera to the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, she has developed a model of different types of potential audience members and their various learning styles, and is setting out to address the particular needs of different groups...And with this, Elliott may be pointing toward an important lesson for the field in general. If you want people to remain invested in tradition, continue to create new ones, in the footprint of the old."

~ Midgette, Anne. "Classical music needs more supporters. Tanglewood's new buildings are there to create them."

The Washington Post, August 2, 2019."

"[The Tanglewood Learning Institute] proves that a symphony orchestra need not be a museum for established masterworks and gray-haired audiences, as some critics contend."

~ Pincus, Andrew L. "At Tanglewood's new institute, music is a gateway to ideas" Berkshire Eagle, February 6, 2019.

"Credit TLI Director Sue Elliott for coming up with all this delicious food for the brain..."

~ Elliott, Susan (no relation). "Who Needs an Orchestra?" Musical America, October 11, 2019.

"It's riveting. It's unsettling and uncomfortable...For many it will be emotional. It's an Experience with a capital E. Go, go, go now and get your tickets for An American Dream, the new opera commissioned by Seattle Opera about our history, our experiences here during WWII, understood through lives displaced and disrupted..."

~ Kiraly, Philippa. "A Triumph for Seattle Opera." City Arts Magazine, August 22, 2015.

"Nothing like the exuberant dazzle of mariachi to explode operatic stereotypes...Labels be damned. The point is that the collaborators tell a moving story with universal appeal, about several generations of a family..."

~ van Rhein, John. "Lyric's Fusion of Opera, Mariachi Brings Crowd to Its Feet." Chicago Tribune, April 8, 2013.

"Astoundingly beautiful and compelling...The experience crafted by Leonard Foglia, José 'Pepe' Martínez, and Houston Grand Opera is most likely the best one I have ever had the pleasure to enjoy in my life. I was completely swept away and wholly moved by the entire production of Cruzar la Cara de la Luna."

~ Clark, David. "Cruzar la Cara de la Luna is Astoundingly Beautiful and Compelling." Broadway World, March 22, 2013.

"...The Refuge offers a model of how an arts organization can achieve civic stature: by engaging the hearts and minds of diverse communities...I found the total experience one of the most moving I have ever had...The work speaks on so many levels that it acts as a prism reflecting all aspects of what makes up humanity...But it is the work's overall sweep, and its optimistic message of hope and of the nobility of

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human beings, that ultimately defines The Refuge as a very special work of art. What makes The Refuge so important is that it is a stunning concept for true, deep community engagement and, at the same time, an important work...it has helped Houston Grand Opera leap into the forefront of what we mean when we talk about our major arts institutions achieving civic stature. “

~ Fogel, Henry. “Immigrant Songs.” Symphony Magazine, September–October 2008.