

ROYCE VAVREK

You may recognize Royce as the librettist for AtG's *Indians on Vacation* project with Edmonton Opera. As our new Artistic Director, Royce brings a wealth of experience, and a reputation as one of the most celebrated librettists in contemporary opera. A Canada-born, Brooklyn-based artist, Vavrek has been called "the indie Hofmannsthal" by *The New Yorker* and "an exemplary creator of operatic prose" by *The New York Times*. His work has been lauded for its innovative narratives, emotional depth, and ability to resonate with contemporary audiences.

Royce's career is distinguished by his groundbreaking collaborations with leading composers and his ability to craft compelling stories that challenge traditional operatic conventions. His work includes *Angel's Bone* with composer Du Yun, which won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Music. Royce has been commissioned by prestigious organizations including The Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Swedish Opera, Norwegian National Opera, La Monnaie de Munt, Opera Philadelphia, Beth Morrison Projects, Opéra de Montréal, and Houston Grand Opera.

With a BFA in Filmmaking and Creative Writing from Concordia University's Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema in Montreal, and an MFA from New York University's Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program, Royce's multidisciplinary background enables him to approach opera with a fresh perspective, infusing it with elements of film, theater, and contemporary culture. As Artistic Director, Royce is committed to leading AtG into a new chapter, where the company will continue to break boundaries and explore new narratives that resonate with diverse audiences.



ROYCE VAVREK'S CV SNAPSHOT

with Canadian composer Ian Cusson:

Indians on Vacation (2026)

commissioned by Against the Grain Theatre in partnership with Edmonton Opera and the Yukon Arts Centre, starring Marion Newman, Mezzo-soprano; Grant Youngblood, Baritone

with US composer Missy Mazzoli:

Song from the Uproar (2012)

premiered by Beth Morrison Projects

Breaking the Waves (2016)

an adaptation of Lars von Trier's work, premiered at Opera Philadelphia, co-commissioned by Beth Morrison Projects, directed by James Darrah; winner 2017 Music Critics Association of North America award for Best New Opera; nominated for Best World Premiere at the 2017 International Opera Awards

Breaking the Waves (2019)

presented by the Edinburgh International Festival produced by Scottish Opera and Opera Ventures, directed by Tony Award-winning Tom Morris

Proving Up (2018)

an adaptation of Karen Russell's short story commissioned and presented by Washington National Opera, Opera Omaha and The Miller Theatre ; finalist for the MCANA Best New Opera Award

The Listeners (2022)

based on an original story by two-time Governor General's Award-winning playwright Jordan Tannahill, a grand opera for Opera Philadelphia and the Norwegian National Opera

Lincoln in the Bardo (2026-27)

an adaptation of George Saunders' Booker Prize-winning novel, commissioned by the The Metropolitan Opera

with Swedish composer Mikael Karlsson:

So We Will Vanish (2021)

song cycle for renowned mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter, premiered by the Swedish Chamber Orchestra

Crypto (2022)

choreographed by Guillaume Côté for Côté Dance

Evidence of It All (2021)

choreographed by Drew Jacoby for SFDanceworks, featuring narration by actress Rosamund Pike

Melancholia (2023)

based on Lars von Trier's film, commissioned by the Royal Swedish Opera

Fanny and Alexander (2024)

working alongside creative partner Ingmar Bergman, Jr. to musicalize his late father's classic film for La Monnaie de Munt, directed by Ivo van Hove

with US composer David T. Little:

"one of the most exciting composer-librettist teams working in opera today."

Heidi Waleson, Wall Street Journal

Dog Days (2012)

world premiere at Peak Performances @ Montclair, co-produced by Beth Morrison Projects directed by Robert Woodruff named Classical Music Event of the year by Time Out New York "...a standout opera of recent decades." New York Times

JFK (2016)

premiered by Fort Worth Opera, a co-commission with American Lyric Theater and Opéra de Montréal received a ten-star review in Opera Now Magazine

with Italian composer Paola Prestini:

first on the song cycle *Yoani* (2014)

inspired by the blog posts of Yoani Sanchez

The Hubble Cantata (2016)

a virtual reality oratorio produced by VisionIntoArt/National Sawdust in association with Beth Morrison Projects

AIDS Quilt Songbook: Sing for Hope (2014)

Union, sung by Isabel Leonard

Silent Light (2019)

based on the Cannes Jury Prize-winning film by Carlos Reygadas directed by Thaddeus Strassberge, premiered at the Banff Centre

The Old Man and the Sea (2023)

inspired by Ernest Hemingway's story, premiered by Beth Morrison Projects and Vision into Art

In development:

Film Stills , a project for mezzo-soprano Eve Gigliotti

with US composer Ricky Ian Gordon:

27 (2014)

premiered at the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, created for renowned mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, "tells a great American story, about Gertrude Stein, as well as opera in the 21st century." Denver Post Also presented by Pittsburgh Opera, MasterVoices at New York City Center, Michigan Opera Theater, Opéra de Montréal and Opera Las Vegas.

The House Without a Christmas Tree (2017)

adaptation of Gail Rock's Christmas classic for Houston Grand Opera