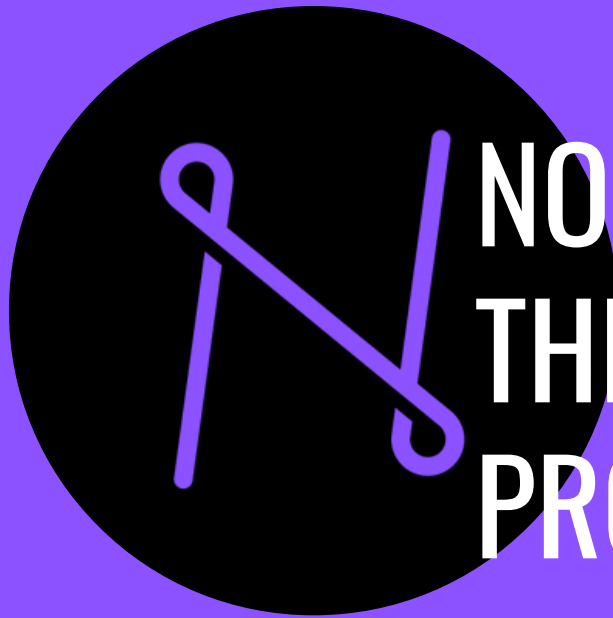


# COMPANY PROFILE



# NO STRINGS THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

2022- 2023 SEASON



EST. 2005

ARTSCAPE WYCHWOOD BARN  
601 CHRISTIE STREET, SUITE 254  
TORONTO, ONTARIO  
M6G 4C7

## WHO WE ARE

Established in 2005 in Toronto as an all-inclusive, easily accessible pre-college training program for students under the guidance of industry professionals, No Strings Theatre, member of the Artscape Wychwood Barns community since 2014, has evolved to focus on providing professional performance opportunities for Emerging Artists through workshops, shows, and developmental projects. Of particular interest is the artistic presentation of "untold stories" of our Canadian community. No Strings Theatre is a registered charity. (CN 801042409 RR 0001).

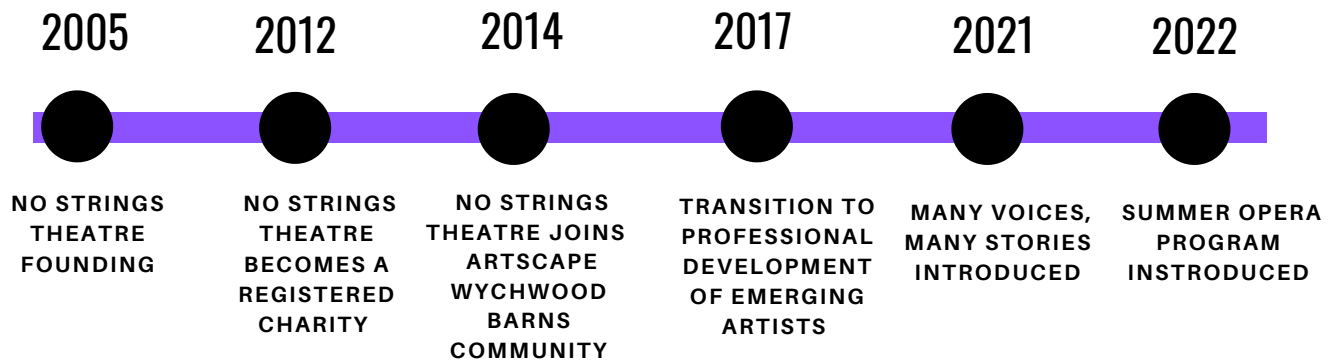
## OUR MISSION

In collaboration with industry professionals, No Strings Theatre aims to develop, empower and inspire the next generation of performing artists. Assuring an equitable space, we are committed to fostering anti-racist, non-biased theatrical practices while reducing socio-economic barriers. Our practices facilitate an inclusive space for community engagement in the arts.

## OUR VISION

*To engage, enrich, and empower our next generation artists in an inclusive and equitable space.*

## OUR HISTORY



## OUR ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP



**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

**DENISE WILLIAMS**

Denise Williams (BSc, MA, ARCT, RMT) is a professional singer, music educator and facilitator. She holds an ARCT in Singing Performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music, a Masters in Community Music from Wilfrid Laurier University, and has studied Arts and Entertainment Administration at Ryerson University. Her 30+ year international solo performance career has put her at home on the concert, opera, and theatre stages, working with, to name a few national companies, The Nathaniel Dett Chorale, The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Mirvish Productions, Eastern Front Theatre, Theatre Northwest as well as international appearances. Denise's self-created and self-produced, *Walk Together Children*, is a concert programming of Black and Jewish music intersections, which has had various presentations for over 20 years. This program has been awarded an OAC grant for its 2023 presentation with the Jubilate Singers and many fine Black, Jewish, and Muslim artists.

Denise has participated in international symposiums, particularly addressing cross-cultural sharing of music traditions involving the African Diaspora.

## PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TEAM



**ANDREA MCLEAN**  
EDUCATION OUTREACH AFFILIATE

Aware that education is essential to social transformation, **Andrea McLean** has spent many years working with young people in schools and community contexts. Her work experience with children and youth includes the Centre for Learning in Haiti, the Training and Transformation (CAFT), the School of Nations in British Guyana . She is currently completing a diploma in Montessori Education - Early Childhood and working toward completing a Royal Conservatory of Music Associate Diploma (ARCT) in Singing. As a young adult, Andrea founded Nancy Campbell Academy Children's Theatre Workshop and coordinated and performed at Art and Soul fundraisers in partnership with the Steven Louis Foundation in London Ontario. She travelled throughout the north, central, and south Americas as a dance theatre performer and workshop facilitator contributing to social transformation and community development.

Andrea's commitment to working with children is commendable. She believes that each child has the capacity and potential to engage meaningfully through exposure to and acquisition of various art forms.

In 2006, **W. Ian Walker** formed his company Emlian Communications Group. Mr. Walker holds a BA in Theatre and Film from McMaster University, and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Fundraising and Volunteer Management from Humber College, Toronto. Ian is a recipient of the Imperial Oil Scholarship to the Banff School of Management, Development for Arts Administrators Seminar.

For 40 years, Mr. Walker has been passionate about being a vocalist, chorister and Arts Administrator in choral or orchestra management requirements. He has worked for Orchestra London, London Pro Musica and formerly The London International Children's Festival, Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir and TMC organization, the Elmer Iseler Singers and the Orpheus Choir of Toronto as their Director of Marketing and Development. Since the release of Walker's book "Stirring My Soul to Sing, Overcoming ADHD Through Song" (published in 2018) his book is now well received internationally.

In July 2022, Ian's redeveloped some characters from his book into a one-hour dramatic ADHD play. "Stirring My Soul to Sing-The Play". As an active speaker, author, ADHD and podcast host, Ian still loves to consult on arts and fundraising projects when his schedule will allow.



**IAN WALKER**  
FUNDRAISING AND  
MARKETING MANAGER

## OUR BOARD

No Strings Theatre is a charitable organization governed by a passionate, experienced, and skilled Board of Directors. See <https://www.nostringstheatre.com/board-of-directors> for bios.



**BRIAN CUNHA**

B.A (Theatre Studies),  
M.Ed (Higher Education)

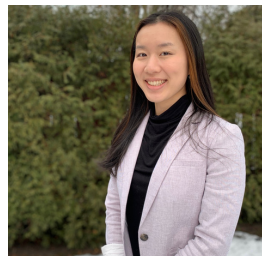
**PRESIDENT,  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD**



**KAREN SAMPSON**

Law Clerk

**CORPORATE  
SECRETARY**



**KATHY HU**

B.A., HBA (with Distinction)

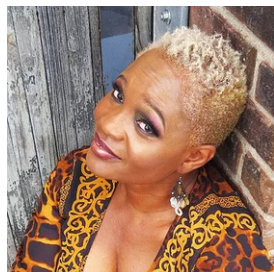
**TREASURER, VICE-CHAIR,  
INTERNAL COMMITTEE**



**SHELLINA YEUNG**

B.Comm. (Hons.), CHRP

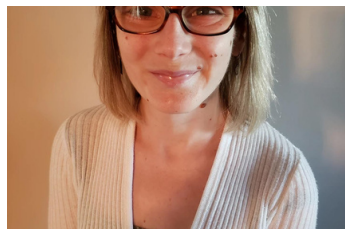
**DIRECTOR,  
INTERNAL AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE**



**DENISE  
WILLIAMS**

B.Sc., M.A., ARCT, RMT

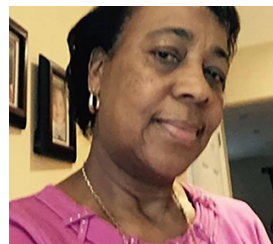
**CHAIR, EXTERNAL  
COMMITTEE**



**BRONWEN  
NICHOLSON**

B.A. (English and Drama  
Studies)

**DIRECTOR,  
VOLUNTEER  
COORDINATOR**



**EULALIE WALLING  
- SAMPSON**

A.A (Human Resources  
and Executive Assistant  
Management)

**DIRECTOR,  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE**



**SHELDON LEUNG**

LL.B (Hons.)(1st Class),  
Juris Doctor

**IMMEDIATE PAST  
VICE-PRESIDENT,  
CHAIR OF INTERNAL  
COMMITTEE**

## OTHER VOLUNTEERS

**JANINA DZIEDZIOLA**

FUNDRAISING AND EDITING

**EMILY CESTRA**

NEWSLETTER

## OUR PROGRAMMING

### MANY VOICES, MANY STORIES



Beyond enriching the Canadian arts community with novel stories, this program also professionally develops the next generation of Canadian emerging artists, writers, and backstage personnel. Each year, No Strings Theatre selects a destination theme for our programming.

In our inaugural year, we chose the destination of the Caribbean by presenting "Dario et La Diabliesse" by Sasky Louison and Darryl Joseph-Dennie, a musical twist on Caribbean folklore directed by Dora Mavor award winner, Richardo Keens-Douglas!

Presently we recognize that the world has undergone centuries of cultural intersections. At this time in our history, we both celebrate the richness of the artistic fusions and also must reconcile that the products of these fusions have not always benefitted all.

With No Strings Theatre's commitment to fostering anti-racist, non-biased theatrical practices, we re-imagined our programming to encourage a new and progressive approach to our future stages, we unveiled our "Many Voices, Many Stories" programming in 2021.



This past season, as society continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we focused on mental health through theatrical therapy workshops by Colleen Taffe and the development of an Emerging Artist's musical based on seasonal affective disorder, "The Storyteller" book, music and lyrics by Kathleen Mills.



## WORKSHOPS AND DISCUSSIONS FOCUSING ON SOCIAL DISCOURSE

Over the past two years, we have hosted discussions with seasoned Black artists and Black emerging artists to discuss their experiences and outlook in the performing arts.

## SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

The pandemic has made it difficult for many performing artists to continue pursuing their dreams. Because of the support from our generous donors, we were able to offer two scholarships to support Black identifying students at Sheridan College and McGill University.

No Strings Theatre intends to continue supporting equity-deserving emerging artists to support their work in achieving their artistic dreams.



## AFFILIATE PROGRAMMING

Witnessing the impact that we have made on many youths and our emerging artists' successes, we feel that it is even more important for us to provide subsidized programming for an increasingly diverse community, recognizing the increased need to foster equality in our society. We were pleased to provide fully subsidized instruction voice, singing/songwriting, and musicianship in the 2021 - 2022 season through programs such as Acting Through Song.

## OUR PAST 2021/2022 SEASON

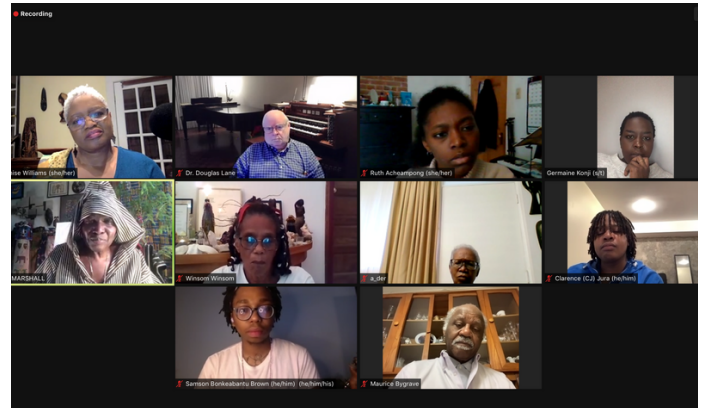


### "IF YOU BELIEVE" FUNDRAISING CONCERT

Welcoming the 2021 holiday season, our annual fundraising event hosted a winter wonderland of classical style, jazz musicians, soul and theatre with keys, sax, bass, drums, steel pan, and voice, honouring Stephen Sondheim, Stevie Wonder, Roberta Flack, Mark Hayes, Jester Hairston and others. The concert featured Juno Award winner Carlos Morgan, Broadway singer/songwriter Michelle Willis, and many NST alumni! The venue for this event was at 'A Different Booklist Cultural Centre' known as 'The Blackhurst Cultural Centre', our pending venue partners.

### BLACK ON STAGE - TAKE 2

In response to our community's continued desire to further understand ways to bridge gaps in achieving equitable performance practices, No Strings Theatre built upon our panel discussion from last year with seasoned Black artists. In the 2021-2022 season, No Strings Theatre invited a panel of Black Emerging Artists to share their experiences in the musical theatre industry and how the industry can keep moving forward.



### EMERGING ARTISTS' SHOW DEVELOPMENT AT THE TARRAGON THEATRE

Musical Theatre Stage Read: The Storyteller by Kathleen Mills - a musical about storytelling, magic, and seasonal affective disorder in June 2022.

### THERAPEUTIC THEATRE WORKSHOPS

To aid creators and audiences emerge from the psychological/emotional throws of the Covid lockdown, NST hosted a free 3-part Therapeutic workshop series designed to balance emotions, feelings and expressions, towards unleashing creativity and holistic wellness given by mental health and addiction specialist, playwright, director, actor and producer, Colleen Taffe.





## SHEIK AND SATER' S SPRING AWAKENING

Licensed Book musical Spring Awakening by Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater (which is having a resurgence on Broadway again), is a coming of age musical that depicts subjects related to religion, sex, abuse, suicide and other traumatic coming of age experiences.

## W. A. MOZART'S LE NOZZE DI FIGARO

This was NST's inaugural Summer Opera in collaboration with William Shookhoff's *Opera by Request*. Director Gregory Finney and NST's summer intern and Associate Director, Anthony Goncherov, gave W. Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, masterpiece a delightful outdoor contemporary spin in English and Italian, at a farm in the Caledon area near Orangeville. This engaged established repetiteur mentors, a cast, and audiences from within the GTA as well as in the neighbouring rural areas.

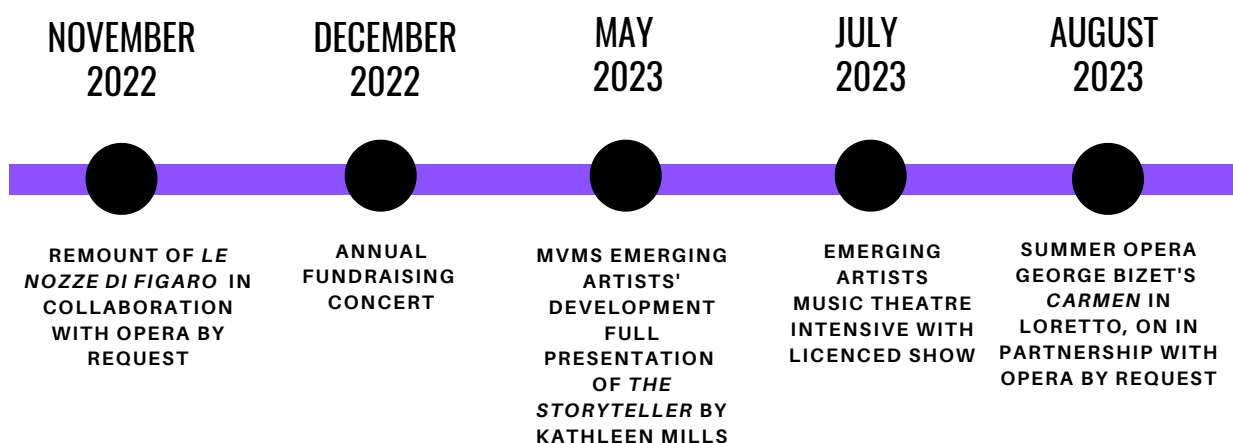


## MALTON BLACK DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION- BLACK EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

No Strings Theatre partnered with the Malton Black Development Association to create a multi-disciplined arts program for middle school black youths identified as at risk. Denise Williams spearheaded this program and gathered a team of professional established black artists to deliver 25 hrs of arts programming (music, visual arts, creative writing, and dance) to the youths, focusing on 'The Nutmeg Princess', by the award-winning Caribbean-Canadian, Richardo-Keens Douglas.



## OUR YEAR TO COME!



## A VOTE FOR US! FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

*I was incredibly fortunate to receive a scholarship from the No Strings Theatre company, and had the opportunity to learn from amazing teachers and have my musical theatre debut in the production of The Drowsy Chaperone! Everyone at No Strings Theatre is so passionate about what they do and willing to go above and beyond to help their students reach their full potential. I am now studying for a Bachelor's in Health Sciences, and although I am not pursuing a career in the arts, my experience at No Strings has undoubtedly cultivated discipline and grown my appreciation for the arts.*

*Sarah Kang, Teen Program*

*No Strings Theatre supported me to develop not only my skill as an actor but also to create new community and friendships as a newcomer. I joined an emerging artist program in the summer of 2016 which was a few weeks after I first arrived in Canada to pursue my musical theatre acting career. I had no friends nor family in Canada but No Strings Theatre became my new family and helped me to begin my new journey. I have now recently graduated from the Randolph College for Performing Arts and am a professional musical theatre performer in Canada.*

*Emi Yasuo, Emerging Artist Program*

# A VOTE FOR US!

## FROM OUR CREATIVE TEAM

*Working with No Strings Theatre for my Directorial debut was nothing short of a dream. The support given to me as both an artist and administrator was almost more than one could ask for. Denise Williams and her team provided a safe, nurturing space for myself and my artists to explore Mozart's Nozze di Figaro. The environment created by Denise, her team at No Strings Theatre, along with their partnership with Opera By Request was extraordinarily successful in combining artists of all skill levels and backgrounds. The seasoned professionals were still challenged in their art, and those artists who had zero operatic experience were able to perform a complete role in a fully-staged opera in less than a month. I am honoured to be given the opportunity to share my directorial debut with No Strings Theatre. It was an experience like no other, and I am thrilled at the possibility of future collaborations.*

*Gregory Finney, Director*

*It has been my pleasure to have been associated with No Strings Theatre, as mentor, collaborator, and simply audience member, for a decade or more. From my first association with the organization, I have been impressed by its diversity and inclusivity, in terms of participants, program content, and audience outreach. It has been extremely gratifying over the years to witness new talent, nurtured by No Strings Theatre, achieve unimaginable success in the professional theatre world in southern Ontario and beyond. The creation of new work by some of its participants has achieved wide-spread recognition among directors, producers and performers. Throughout my association with this organization, I have never ceased to be impressed by the combination of kindness, encouragement, and professionalism bestowed by its director, Denise Williams. Those of us, like myself, who have also acted in a directorial capacity from time to time, have striven to live up to this example. I look forward to the continued success and ongoing achievements of No Strings Theatre.*

*William Shookhoff, Director, Opera by Request*

# CONTACT US


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Toronto, Ontario  
M6G 4C7

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