



# NEWS FROM OPERA COLORADO

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## Opera Colorado's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary season sings with music and drama in 2013

Opera Colorado celebrates thirty years of excellence with a season-long celebration featuring some of the most fascinating stars of the opera world. Great performers combine with characters from the worlds of great literature and romance to create three soul-stirring stories that sing with some of the greatest music ever written.

Current season subscribers will have the first chance to purchase season tickets for this remarkable lineup when season renewals mail later this month. In April, the general public will be able to purchase season tickets. To learn more about the 2013 season and to start renewing your season tickets, visit [OperaColorado.org/2013](http://OperaColorado.org/2013) or call 303.468.2030.

### **Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet***

By Charles Gounod

**February 9, 12, 15 and 17, 2013**

The thirtieth anniversary season kicks off with a dramatic retelling of Shakespeare's famous tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*. Gounod's opera follows closely Shakespeare's romantic story of young love cut short by a deadly feud, often at times even using the Bard's original text. *Romeo and Juliet* was last seen at Opera Colorado in 1999. In fair Verona is where we set our scene with lush and beautiful sets and costumes set in Shakespeare's original time period. *Romeo and Juliet*, the world's most popular love story, will be perfect for the Valentine season and will make a hauntingly beautiful season opener.

Conductor: **Robert Wood** (Opera Colorado debut) ● Stage Director: **Bill Murray**

### **Starring...**

#### **Heidi Stober** as Juliet

Most recent Opera Colorado performance: *The Pearl Fishers*, 2009. She will make her role debut with this performance. Other appearances include: Deutsche Oper Berlin, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, and the Santa Fe Opera.

"The standout was Heidi Stober as the younger daughter. Her limpid, very pretty soprano was a delight every time she sang." - *The Wall Street Journal*

"Also deserving special mention is Heidi Stober. This terrific soprano takes on two roles, but it is her bravura, fun-filled performance as Folly that sticks in the memory. Seemingly able to do virtually anything she wants vocally, Stober handled the role's coloratura demands with spectacular ease." - *The Denver Post*

### **Giuseppe Varano as Romeo (Opera Colorado debut)**

Italian tenor Giuseppe Varano debuted in 2002-2003 as Alfredo in *La Traviata* in Busseto directed by Franco Zeffirelli. Recent credits: Oper Leipzig as Rodolfo in *La bohème* and the Savonlinna Opera Festival as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*.

"Giuseppe Varano's tenor has an Italian, sparkling and strong substance and power, which carries even through the thickest thunder of the orchestra. Varano also feels and lives through every single change of incidents and lines, which electrifies the opera." -- *Lempinen-Vesa*

### **Kevin Langan as Friar Laurent**

Most recent Opera Colorado performance: The Captain in *Florenzia en el Amazonas*. With almost 1300 career performances, he has performed over 80 different operatic roles. He is the first leading artist to achieve 300 performances with The San Francisco Opera.

"And easily the best among the secondary roles was the Friar Laurence of veteran bass Kevin Langan. In fact, of all the singers, it was Langan who offered the complete package: vibrant, ringing tone, polished phrasing, incisive diction, and convincing, unfussy acting."

-*MusicalCriticism.com*

"Deep, toffee-smooth voice and convincing interpretive abilities" -Tim Page, *New York Times*

### **Daniel Belcher as Mercutio**

Most recent Opera Colorado performance: *Cinderella*, 2011. 2011 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording; nominated for a 2010 Gramophone Award. Other appearances include: Houston Grand Opera, Grand Théâtre de Genève, New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera.

"A born comedian, baritone Daniel Belcher clearly delights in this production and the role of Dandini, even drawing laughs at times with his playful takes on Rossini's vocal ornamentations." --*The Denver Post*

"Daniel Belcher's Mercutio supplies the production's best vocalism, his baritone at once rich and finely focused." *The Dallas Morning News*

### **Marcia Ragonetti as Juliet's nurse**

Most recent Opera Colorado performance: *Carmen*, 2005. A regular performer with Opera Colorado since the company's second season in 1984. Other appearances include: Central City Opera, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Music Festival, Opera Fort Collins, Utah Opera, Colorado Opera Festival.

"As the Nurse Marcia Ragonetti delivered sterling, well-sung portrayals that lend gravity, depth and exuberance to the proceedings." --*Westword*

## ***Don Giovanni***

By **W. A. Mozart**

**March 30, April 2, 5, and 7 2013**

Mozart's Don was one of the greatest seducers of all time. His conquests were so numerous that his sidekick needed an entire aria just to list them all. But Don Giovanni is more than a single-minded ladies man. His personality is so beguiling that the audience actually starts to cheer him on even as his dark urges leave a path of destruction in his wake. Mozart's masterful and thought-provoking opera stirs the human spirit with its melodies even as it questions the nature of justice with its hell-raising ending. Sets and costumes come from Boston Lyric Opera where critic Elizabeth Pertan called it a great success. "Even though this opera was first premiered in 1787, its values, events and characters seemed meaningful, relevant and reflective of today's society," she wrote.

Conductor: **Ari Pelto** (Opera Colorado debut) ● Stage Director: **Kevin Newbury**

### **Starring...**

#### **Christopher Magiera as Don Giovanni (Opera Colorado debut)**

Currently: ensemble member of Semperoper Dresden; summer of 2011: Opera Theatre of St. Louis where he received critical acclaim for his portrayal as the Captain in *The Death of Klinghoffer*. Summer of 2012: returns to the Santa Fe Opera as Zurga in a new production of *The Pearl Fishers*.

"...warm-voiced Christopher Magiera portrays the Captain with weight and authority." --*Bloomberg*

"Among a uniformly outstanding cast, Christopher Magiera, a handsome baritone, stands out as a warm, brave and sympathetic Captain." --*The New York Times*

#### **Ellie Dehn as Donna Anna (Opera Colorado debut)**

Ms. Dehn has performed with the world's leading opera house including Teatro alla Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Rome, Geneva, Bologna, Houston Grand Opera and many others. Her performance as Donna Anna was recently aired live as part of The Met's Live HD broadcasts.

"Ellie Dehn, her innocence touched with guile, is a radiant Mimi; hers is a voice of enveloping warmth and richness. In her death scene, played with artful simplicity, more than one tear rolled down my hardened critical cheek." --*Star Tribune*

"Ellie Dehn brought a fiercely burning emotional core to the opera, with powerfully controlled acting and richly varied singing that filled out the limpid, voluptuous vocal lines with intensely beautiful, soaring tone." --*Opera News*

#### **Melody Moore as Donna Elivra (Opera Colorado debut)**

World Premiere of Christopher Theofanidis' *Heart of a Soldier* at San Francisco Opera; Stephen Schwartz's, *Séance on a Wet Afternoon* at New York City Opera; Recent critically acclaimed performances include two appearances with English National Opera as Mimi in Jonathan Miller's production of *La Bohème* and as Marguerite in Des McAnuff's production of *Faust*.

"This young lady is special. She has the most distinctive dark complexion to her voice, and she sings and phrases with real fantasy. She alone really filled the house, and hearing the voice open to greet the coming spring in her Act I aria was for sure one of the high spots of the evening."

--*The Independent*

"Melody Moore was a touching Mimi with a generous, smoothly produced soprano that filled out the Coliseum with apparent ease. Hers is a voice that has just that mix of spinto power and vulnerability that the role needs and she's singer who would not be out of place across the West End, singing the role on the Covent Garden stage." -- *Musical Criticism*

**Professional World Premiere**  
**Lori Laitman 's *The Scarlet Letter***  
**May 4, 7, 10 and 12, 2013**

Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel comes to life on the stage of the Ellie with a dramatic new adaptation by composer Lori Laitman and Colorado Poet Laureate David Mason. In colonial Boston, Hester Prynne is charged with adultery and forced to wear a mark of shame that may cause her to lose her beloved daughter. Will Hester betray the identity of her daughter's father? Or will she and her secret love escape the bonds of Puritan hypocrisy and the laws of men in the new world? The production is under the direction of Beth Greenberg and will feature sets designed by the same team that brought the Opera Colorado audience to its feet for our 2011 production of *Rusalka*.

Conductor: **Dean Williamson** ● Stage Director: **Beth Greenberg** (Opera Colorado debut)  
Set Design: **Erhard Rom** ● Lighting Design: **Robert Wierzel** ● Projection Design: **Wendall K. Harrington**

**Starring...**

**Elizabeth Futral as Hester Prynne**

Most recent Opera Colorado performance: *Julius Caesar*, 2004. Elizabeth Futral has established herself as one of the major coloratura sopranos in the world today. Recent performances include Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Lincoln Center Festival, Los Angeles Opera, New York City Opera and many others.

"The taut ensemble features Elizabeth Futral in particularly impressive form as Fiordiligi...she gives the phrases an affecting tenderness that gets to the humanity behind Mozart's comedy."

-Tim Smith, *The Baltimore Sun*

"Futral floats the songs on a voice that sounds tender and radiant and intimate, scaled to the space she's singing in." -Anne Midgette, *The Washington Post*

**James Valenti as Arthur Dimmesdale (Opera Colorado debut)**

American tenor James Valenti has been hailed for having a voice of Italianate beauty, for his handsome stage presence, ardent singing and for his elegant musicianship in performances with the leading opera companies of the world.

"The young, handsome American tenor James Valenti, in his Met debut as Alfredo, won over the audience with his robust, ardent singing." --Anthony Tomisini, *The New York Times*

"James Valenti's Alfredo is glorious – a most tuneful guardian, with admirable vocal delicacy."

--*The Guardian*

**Morgan Smith as Roger Chillingworth**

Most recent Opera Colorado performance: *La Bohème*, 2010. Recently heralded for his creation of first mate Starbuck in the world premiere of *Moby-Dick* at The Dallas Opera. Upcoming seasons include *Moby Dick* with San Francisco Opera, North American Premiere of Weinberg's *The Passenger* with Houston Grand Opera and Lincoln Center Festival, Fritz in *Die Tote Stadt* with Dallas Opera, and Marcello in *La Bohème* with San Diego Opera.

"Morgan Smith's strong, dense baritone perfectly suits the sturdy Quaker Starbuck." --Scott Cantrell *Dallas Morning News*

"The cast was superb from top to bottom...tenor Ben Heppner...had an intelligent and rich-toned counterpart in the Starbuck of baritone Morgan Smith."--Joshua Kosman *The San Francisco Chronicle*