



## **Ari Pelto to Join Opera Colorado as Artistic Advisor**

### **“Stories that Sing” Fundraising Campaign Continues, in Support of Performances, Education, and Outreach Initiatives**

DENVER, CO—May 30, 2013—Opera Colorado announced today that it has appointed conductor Ari Pelto as Artistic Advisor. Pelto’s role will commence with the Company’s 2014 season, working hand-in-hand with General Director Greg Carpenter and conducting one opera per season beginning in the fall of 2014. Pelto made his Opera Colorado debut earlier this year, conducting the company’s highly-acclaimed production of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* in March 2013. Known for presenting contemporary and rarely performed works as well as more traditional productions of classic opera repertoire, Opera Colorado is the preeminent grand opera company in the Rocky Mountain region and a vital presence in Denver’s cultural ecology.

Ari Pelto is a celebrated conductor whose work takes him to opera houses, ballets, symphonies and conservatories throughout the United States and around the globe. In America, he has conducted productions at New York City Opera, including *Madama Butterfly*, *Carmen* and *La Traviata*, as well as acclaimed performances at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, Chautauqua, Minnesota Opera, Portland Opera, Utah Opera and Opera Memphis, among many others.

Known for his riveting and insightful interpretations of the classic masterworks of Mozart, Verdi and Puccini, Pelto has also led ground-breaking productions including Twyla Tharp’s *Princess and the Goblin* in 2012 and Virginia Opera’s provocative new reading of Previn’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*. As a collaborator he has formed strong bonds with some of opera’s most prominent stage directors, among them: Stephen Lawless, David Edwards, Kevin Newbury, Garnett Bruce, Robin Guarino, Ned Canty and Sam Helfrich. Pelto also works regularly to discover and develop international vocal talent from

America's Curtis Institute, Juilliard, Merola and Wolf Trap to London's Covent Garden and Tokyo's New National Theatre, where for eight years he served as a faculty member and guest conductor. Pelto's 2013 schedule brings him to Italy and Ecuador for productions of *Così Fan Tutte* and Gounod's *Faust*.

"I spent a great deal of time watching Ari work with our artists, director, staff and orchestra during our recent production of *Don Giovanni* and was so impressed with his ability to bring out the subtleties and nuances of Mozart's score which contributed so greatly to the overarching drama of the staging," noted General Director Greg Carpenter. "Ari's knowledge of and access to talented singers, both well established and on the rise, will greatly benefit Opera Colorado as we plan for future seasons. I'm thrilled that Ari has accepted this position and can't wait to get to work."

"This spring I had the tremendous pleasure of working with Opera Colorado on *Don Giovanni*," noted Ari Pelto. "It is gratifying to work with a company that is known throughout the opera world for its thoughtful programming and impeccable performance standards. I am honored to be joining Opera Colorado as Artistic Advisor at this exciting time and very much look forward to collaborating with Greg to continue to bring great opera to life in Denver."

Earlier this year, Opera Colorado announced that it was embarking on a restructuring of its operating procedures that would allow the Company to continue its commitment to bringing exceptional programming and educational resources to Colorado, while stabilizing the Company for the future. The reorganization has included a combination of cutting operating expenses—including identifying staffing efficiencies—and increasing fundraising. The creation of the Artistic Advisor position is an important part of this restructuring, and streamlines the responsibilities of staff positions—including Director of Artistic Operations, a role held by outgoing staff member Brad Trexell.

"Over the past few months we have had to make extraordinarily difficult decisions regarding our staffing structure and we are unable to maintain the full-time position of Director of Artistic Operations—a post which has been held by Brad Trexell for the past four years," said Greg Carpenter. "Brad has been an incredible colleague and his talent has greatly contributed to the successes of Opera Colorado. He will be greatly missed and we wish him nothing but the best in his next adventure."

"I am very proud of the productions and the artists we put on stage at the Ellie over the past five seasons. Opera is always an adventure—onstage and off—and as I move on to *my* next adventure, I am

grateful to Opera Colorado’s Board, Greg Carpenter, the staff, artists, musicians, stage crew, our audience, and especially the volunteers for the opportunity to do what we do. It has been a privilege, and I wish the Company all the best in the future,” noted outgoing Director of Artistic Operations Brad Trexell.

Opera Colorado’s recently announced 2014 season will include a traditional staging of Giuseppe Verdi’s *Rigoletto* (March 15, 18, 21, 23) and a more contemporary staging of Georges Bizet’s *Carmen* (May 3, 6, 9, 11). In addition to these two mainstage productions, Opera Colorado will continue its Young Artists residency program, as well as a variety of other education and community engagement activities which reach more than 35,000 community members annually. The Company will announce its 2014 Young Artists in the coming weeks. The Opera’s 2013 fundraising initiatives—the “Stories that Sing: Be a Voice for Opera Colorado” campaign and Annual Fund—have raised \$1.5 million to-date.

#### **About Opera Colorado**

A cornerstone of Denver’s cultural community, Opera Colorado presents an annual season of two operas at its downtown Denver home, the Ellie Caulkins Opera House. The Company presents new works alongside standard repertoire, and reaches more than 35,000 students and community members throughout the Rocky Mountain region through a variety of education and outreach programming. Opera Colorado Young Artists, a five-month residency for singers at the beginning stages of their careers, provides training for the next generation of American opera performers. Founded in 1983, the Company celebrated its 30th anniversary in the 2013 season. [www.operacolorado.org](http://www.operacolorado.org).

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