



Opera Colorado's Upcoming Productions Include *Madama Butterfly*, *The Magic Flute*, *Aida* and the World Premiere of *The Scarlet Letter*

DENVER, CO—March 17, 2014—Opera Colorado announced today that it will present Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (November 2014), W.A. Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (May 2015), Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* (November 2015), and the world premiere of Lori Laitman's *The Scarlet Letter* (May 2016) starring Elizabeth Futral as Hester Prynne. A vital presence in Denver's cultural ecology, Opera Colorado is the Rocky Mountain region's preeminent grand opera company. The Opera's programming includes mainstage productions, artist development initiatives, and education and community engagement programming.

Reflective of Opera Colorado's commitment to staging classic repertoire while also inspiring audiences and providing opportunities for emerging young talent, these upcoming productions will include traditional stagings of *Madama Butterfly* and *Aida* (which has not been performed at Opera Colorado for 20 years), alongside a new production of *The Magic Flute* and the world premiere of *The Scarlet Letter*—featuring the return to Opera Colorado of celebrated soprano Elizabeth Futral in a new, contemporary adaptation of the classic Nathaniel Hawthorne novel.

"The operas we are planning over the next few years represent the full spectrum of our artistic vision. Productions of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Verdi's *Aida* are mainstays of any opera season. Artistic Advisor Ari Pelto and I have assembled outstanding casts for these great works, including many singers making their Opera Colorado debuts," said General Director Greg

Carpenter. “Additionally, I am thrilled that we have found a place in our 2016 season for *The Scarlet Letter*—a new, American opera with music by Lori Laitman and a libretto by our own Colorado Poet Laureate, David Mason. This will be *The Scarlet Letter’s* world premiere, and we are so pleased to present this new work under the visionary direction of Beth Greenberg, and starring one of today’s most dynamic sopranos, Elizabeth Futral.”

“To create one of the best-known characters from American literature will be a thrilling opportunity,” said soprano Elizabeth Futral. “And as she is delineated through the deft lyricism of Lori Laitman’s score...a sheer luxury!”

As Opera Colorado looks forward to all four of these productions, the company continues to maintain high artistic standards while operating under a reorganization implemented in 2013. “Over the past twelve months we have been working diligently to restructure Opera Colorado, positioning it for long-term sustainability and artistic achievement,” explains Greg Carpenter. “We have embraced significant challenges and made many difficult decisions, all of which have proven successful in stabilizing our financial health and allowing us to plan exciting programming for future seasons.” Opera Colorado’s fiscal year began on July 1, 2013. Thanks to tremendous community support, the company has met revenue goals for the first two quarters of the fiscal year, and is on track to do the same for the third quarter.

In addition to these 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 35,500 community members annually—including a traveling, hour-long production of *Romeo and Juliet* for school age students. The Company will announce its 2015 Young Artists in the coming months.

About Madama Butterfly

Giacomo Puccini’s tragic tale of the beautiful young Japanese Ciocio-san “Butterfly,” wed to American Naval Officer Pinkerton, captures in stunning music the longing of a deferred reunion, lost love, betrayal and guilt. The traditional costumes and sets will bring to life both the cultural beauty and emotional angst of this story.

About The Magic Flute

Mozart’s classic opera features the debut of rising star Maureen McKay as Pamina and emerging talent So Young Park as Queen of the Night, along with the return of Daniel Belcher as Papageno and Jonathan Boyd as Tamino. This new Opera Colorado production of *The Magic Flute* will come to life under the direction of Daniel Witzke and conductor Joseph Mechavich.

About *Aida*

In all the splendor of the Pharaohs, Verdi's *Aida* catapults to the forefront a love triangle. Ripe with the complexities of loyalties and jealousy during a time of war and conquest, two strong women test their fate to win the man whom they both love. Verdi's vivid music, along with grand opera's costumes and sets make this production an experience with all of the best that opera offers.

About *The Scarlet Letter*

The Scarlet Letter famous character trio -- the young and beautiful seamstress Hester Prynne; Dr. Chillingworth, her deformed and estranged husband; and the ethereal Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, Hester's lover and father of her daughter Pearl -- lands us on familiar "operatic" ground as these characters grapple with theatrically-heightened emotions. We look with awe at the Reverend's self-destruction and descent into madness; we marvel at Hester's ability for self-sacrifice and unwavering strength; how she is a woman alone against society and how she holds onto her inner freedom; and, we question the monstrous vengeance plied by Dr. Chillingworth. In some ways the Doctor is the "most operatic" of all as he rages with an addictive force fueled by intellectual and sexual frustration. As these three lives collide, and are played out against the god-fearing community within the superstitious climate of Puritan America, the work races towards its shocking climax. For librettist and Colorado Poet Laureate David Mason's precise, rich and fast-moving text, the composer Lori Laitman has written a work of power and intensity. She consistently hits the mark to reveal characters in their challenging situations, all the while having composed music of lyric beauty that singers love to sing. Audiences also love to hear her music and she involves the listener immediately and easily. This is an opera that gets to the heart of why opera fans want to continue hearing new work.

About the Artists

Madama Butterfly | Puccini | November 15, 18, 21, 23, 2014

Xiu Ying Li* | *Cio-Cio San*

"The Chinese soprano Shuying Li was convincing and vocally impressive as Cio-Cio San. She was sweet and timid at first, patient and hopeful throughout her husband's long absence and finally distraught on learning the truth of his unfaithfulness. Her strong, clear expressive voice penetrated Puccini's lush orchestration." (NYCO, *New York Times*) In the space of a few seasons, Li has become the most sought after interpreter of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in North America. Since her 2001 professional debut in the role with Providence opera, she has sung *Butterfly* with New York City Opera at Lincoln Center and on their tour to Japan, Florida Grand Opera, Connecticut Opera, Baltimore Opera, Fresno Opera, Columbus Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Hawaii Opera Theater, Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, Portland Opera, Austin Lyric Opera and the Hong Kong Festival. In 2008 the City Opera's production of *Butterfly* was telecast on PBS' *Live from Lincoln Center* and awarded an EMMY. In 2009-2010 she sang Liu in *Turandot* for Opera Ottawa, *Butterfly* with El Paso Opera, Arizona Opera and Orlando Philharmonic and a recording of *Butterfly* with the Atlanta Symphony under Robert Spano. In 2014 she will also sing *Butterfly* with Opera Ottawa. In 1998 she won the Fourth Budapest International Voice Competition. She is currently on the voice faculty at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

Erica Brookhyser* | *Suzuki*

Erica Brookhyser begins her fourth season as principle mezzo in the permanent ensemble at Staatstheater Darmstadt in Germany. Winner of ARTE-TV's talent search show, "Open Opera--Who will become Carmen?" Brookhyser competed for and won the title role in *Carmen* produced by Berlin's Seefestspiele and directed by Oscar-winning German film director Volker Schlöndorff. She completed

her operatic training at Los Angeles Opera's Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program in 2010. Prior she studied Vocal Performance at the University of Oregon and New England Conservatory and did additional training at the opera studios of Santa Fe Opera, Utah Opera, Central City Opera, and the Tanglewood Music Festival. In the 2013-14 season Brookhyser performs Meg Page in *Falstaff* at Los Angeles Opera and makes her role debut as Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* at Staatstheater Darmstadt. She will also be performing Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Blumenmädchen in *Parsifal* and *Emilia* in *Othello* in Darmstadt. Her concert appearances include Mendelssohn's Elias, Schönberg's Second String Quartet, a Monteverdi chamber music concert and a solo recital for the Newport Symphony Orchestra. Brookhyser's artistic collaborators include stage directors Achim Freyer, Lee Blakeley, Chas Rader-Shieber, Michiel Dijkema, Marta Domingo and John Dew, as well as conductors James Conlon, Plácido Domingo, William Lacey and Stuart Bedford.

Dinyar Vania* | *B. F. Pinkerton*

With a voice which combines both power and beauty, Dinyar Vania has earned critical acclaim portraying several of the most beloved roles in opera. His 2013-14 season includes his debuts with Minnesota Opera as Des Grieux in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, with Lyric Opera Baltimore as Cavaradossi in *Tosca* and Virginia Opera as *Don Jose* in *Carmen*. He made his debut with Boston Lyric Opera in 2012-13 as Lieutenant Pinkerton, with Spoleto Festival USA as Roberto in Puccini's *Le Villi* and several others. In 2011-12 he sang Rodolfo in *La bohème* with Dayton Opera, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with Pensacola Opera and Ettore in the world premiere of Kimmo Hakola's *La Fenice* with the Savolinna Festival. Recent highlights include Don José in *Carmen* in his debut with Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Duke in *Rigoletto* with Opera Grand Rapids, Rodolfo in *La bohème* with the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra, a return to the roster of New York City Opera for *L'elisir d'amore* and soloist in an evening of opera arias with Seattle Symphony Orchestra among many others. Vania received Syracuse Opera's Artist of the Year Award, First Place in the Giulio Gari Vocal Competition, Second Prize in the Licia Albanese-Puccini Competition and was a semi-finalist in Plácido Domingo's Operalia in Madrid, Spain.

John Hancock* | *Sharpless*

Acclaimed for his refined vocalism and theatrical versatility, baritone John Hancock made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Le Gendarme in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* under the baton of James Levine. He has since appeared in a dozen roles with the company, including Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Albert in *Werther*, Brétigny in *Manon*, Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette*, and both Marcello and Schaunard in *La bohème*. At San Francisco Opera he has sung the roles of Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Yeletsky in *Queen of Spades* and Lescaut in *Manon Lescaut*. His New York City Opera productions include *Capriccio*, *Carmina Burana* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He has also sung leading roles with Washington National Opera, New Israeli Opera, Opéra du Rhin, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Cincinnati Opera. A gifted interpreter of contemporary opera, Hancock has created leading roles in several world premieres. Of his performance in Pascal Dusapin's *Faustus*, the *New York Times* wrote, "John Hancock was particularly strong in the title role, seizing every opportunity to soar." Hancock is a graduate of the Juilliard Opera Center, where he was winner of the Richard F. Gold Grant. He has also received grants and prizes from the Metropolitan Opera National Council, the Loren L. Zachary Society and the Sullivan Foundation.

Ari Pelto | *Conductor*

In May 2013, Opera Colorado appointed Ari Pelto as Artistic Advisor. Conductor Ari Pelto is in demand at elite opera houses, ballets, symphonies and conservatories throughout the United States. After his highly praised 2004 début at New York City Opera with Verdi's *La Traviata*, Pelto was engaged as a regular guest there, returning for *Madama Butterfly*, Jennifer Griffith's *The Dream President*, *La bohème* and *Carmen*. Recent highlights and upcoming opera house engagements include *La bohème* with the

Opera Theatre of St. Louis and the St. Louis Symphony, *The Cunning Little Vixen* at Chautauqua, *Rusalka* and *La bohème* at Boston Lyric Opera, *Romeo et Juliet* at Minnesota Opera, *The Magic Flute*, *Figaro* and *Hansel and Gretel* at Portland Opera, as well as *Carmen* and *Hansel and Gretel* at Utah Opera. He has also been a regular guest conductor of the Atlanta Ballet. In 2012, he collaborated with Twyla Tharp on the premiere of her new ballet, *The Princess and the Goblin*. Pelto has conducted operas of Mozart and Stravinsky at the Curtis Institute of Music, Gluck and Mozart at the Juilliard School, Puccini and Massenet at San Francisco Conservatory, and Stephen Paulus and Raffaello de Banfield at the Manhattan School of Music. At the Oberlin Conservatory, he has led works of Mahler, Mozart and Poulenc, and at New York University, works of Sibelius, Brahms, Dvorak and Martinu. He has also conducted in Italy, Germany and Bulgaria. Pelto studied violin performance at Oberlin and conducting at Indiana University.

Keturah Stickann* | Director

Keturah Stickann has quickly established herself in the opera world as a critically acclaimed choreographer and director. Recent highlights include choreographing *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna* for Lyric Opera of Chicago/Lyric Unlimited, directing and choreographing *The Pearl Fishers* for the Sarasota Opera and directing *Madama Butterfly* for Opera Santa Barbara. She is the movement director and choreographer for *Moby Dick*, which has played at the San Francisco Opera, Calgary Opera, State Opera of South Australia, San Diego Opera and Dallas Opera. Directing credits include *Manon* and *La Traviata* at Knoxville Opera, *La nozze di Figaro* and *Suor Angelica* at Emerald City Opera, Britten's *Canticles* at Glimmerglass Opera, *The Brecht Project* at Envision Arts San Diego, as well as scenes programs and youth performances at Glimmerglass Opera and Central City Opera, where she was on the directing staff. She has also acted as Associate Director for *Agrippina* at New York City Opera, *Orfeo* at Atlanta Opera and *The Elixir of Love* at Emerald City Opera. As a choreographer, she has made dance at San Diego Opera, Opera Pacific, Portland Opera, Florida Grand Opera, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Virginia Opera and DePaul Opera Theater. She received her B.A. in dance education and choreography from Columbia College Chicago, and was a 1997 nominee for the Princess Grace Award for excellence in the arts.

The Magic Flute | Mozart | May 2, 5, 8, 10, 2015

Maureen McKay* | Pamina

Following performances of Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, the Washington Post hailed soprano Maureen McKay as the "undisputed star of the show," and further exclaimed, "Armed with a silvery, precisely aimed voice, natural stage presence and the kind of beautifully detailed acting you don't see often enough on the operatic stage, McKay turned in a smart, sexy and thoroughly charming performance." In the 2013-14 season, she makes debuts with the Bayerische Staatsoper in one of her most frequently performed roles, Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Cleveland Orchestra for Mahler's Symphony No. 4 and Saito Kinen Festival as Nannetta in *Falstaff*, both under the baton of Fabio Luisi, and Washington National Opera as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*. She also returns to the Metropolitan Opera roster for the company's production of *Der Rosenkavalier*. Other future engagements include her return as a guest to the Komische Oper Berlin, a return to Portland Opera and debuts with San Diego Opera and Opera Colorado. Last season, she returned to the Komische Oper Berlin for Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* and Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, both new productions, as well as for Mozart's *Requiem* conducted by Henrik Nánási and further performances of Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and Musetta in *La bohème* in addition to joining Washington Concert Opera for Lisa in *La sonnambula*.

Jonathan Boyd | Tamino

Returning to Opera Colorado following his 2013 appearance as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, tenor Jonathan Boyd continually performs to great acclaim throughout Europe, North America and South America. This past season, he made his Scottish National Opera debut as the title role in *Werther*, reprised his signature role of Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* with Portland Opera, and sang the title role in *Faust* with Austin Lyric Opera. Next up, Jonathan appears in concert with the Buffalo Philharmonic in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri*, and with the Fort Worth Symphony in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. He also performs the role of Anatol in *Vanessa* with Opera Metz, as well as makes his debut with the Théâtre du Capitole in Toulouse as Peter Quint/Prologue in *Turn of the Screw*. Other recent engagements included his San Diego Opera debut in Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick as Ishmael*, his Atlanta Opera debut as Edgardo in *Lucia Di Lammermoor*, the title role of *Candide* at the Portland Opera, Sam in *Susannah* with Florentine Opera and Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* with Mid America Productions at Carnegie Hall. Noted North American engagements from the past few seasons include his debut with Seattle Opera as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, a role he also performed with Portland Opera and Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

Daniel Belcher | Papageno

Winner of a 2010 Grammy Award, baritone Daniel Belcher has performed in many of the world's music capitals and returns to Opera Colorado following his appearance in 2013 as Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*. With a 50-role repertoire, Belcher has championed roles from the Baroque to those composed expressly for him. He came to international attention in 2004 creating the role of Prior Walter in Peter Eötvös' *Angels in America* for the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Belcher most recently created the role of Robert Kennedy in Robin de Raaff's *Waiting for Miss Monroe* for his debut at The Netherlands Opera and Holland Festival. In the 2013-14 season, Belcher makes his debut with the Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm, Sweden in Kaija Saariaho's *Sombre*. He will also return to Lyric Opera of Kansas City in the role of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, to Opera Omaha as Dandini in *La Cenerentola* and to Utah Opera as Ping in *Turandot*, and he will perform in recital at Houston's Zilkha Hall, among other venues. He received a Robert Jacobson Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Foundation, a Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation for his work with Wolf Trap Opera and the Sullivan Foundation Award. He received the Apprentice Artist Award from the Santa Fe Opera and the Young Artist Award and Outstanding Studio Artist Award from Central City Opera.

So Young Park* | Queen of the Night

Soprano So Young Park received her Bachelor's Degree in vocal performance from Seoul National University, where she graduated first in her class. At SNU she performed the roles of Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata* and Gilda in *Rigoletto*. Park was the recipient of the Presidential Scholarship for her master's degree at New England Conservatory in 2012, where she performed the roles of the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* and Zerbinetta from the Prologue of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Amore in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* and Lisetta in the world premiere of the critical edition of Rossini's *La gazzetta*. Park was awarded first place at the Young Artists Competition of Philharmonic Society of Arlington, Forte International Music Competition in 2013, and NOA Caroline and Dominick Argento Vocal Competition, Metropolitan International Music Festival Competition, and was a finalist at The Eleanor McCollum Competition by Houston Grand Opera in 2014. In October 2013 she performed the role of the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Boston Lyric Opera. She is currently pursuing her Artist Diploma at the New England Conservatory in the studio of Lorraine Nubar and is also one of Boston Lyric Opera's Emerging Artists. She will also perform the role of Sophie from *Werther* with Boston Lyric Opera in 2016.

Harold Wilson* | Sarastro

American bass Harold Wilson's 2013-2014 calendar features debuts with Hawaii Opera, as Timur in *Turandot*, Sarasota Opera as Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and Dayton Opera for Ramphis in *Aida* and a return to the Metropolitan Opera to cover the Police Commissioner in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Wilson's 2012-2013 season included his debut with Portland Opera as the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, The French General in Kevin Puts' Pulitzer Prize winning opera *Silent Night* with Opera Philadelphia and returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Panthus in *Les Troyens*. He performed with Opera Birmingham as Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* and Tulsa Opera for Ramphis in *Aida*. During the summer of 2013, he sang Emile de Becque in *South Pacific* with New Hampshire's Opera North. As a member of the Deutsche Oper Berlin for five seasons, he sang over 30 roles with the company, including Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Zuniga in *Carmen* and the Hermit in *Der Freischütz*. He was heard on a new recording of Kurt Weill's *Eternal Road* and also sang Handel's *Messiah* with the Seattle Symphony and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Brandenburgische Philharmonie Frankfurt.

Joseph Gaines * | Monostatos

Making his debut with Opera Colorado, Joseph Gaines is a versatile artist who has attracted the attention of opera companies and orchestras, and been recognized by audiences and critics for his beautifully sung, well-acted interpretations of character roles. He has appeared with the Pittsburgh Opera as Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Caius in *Falstaff* and Basilio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and with Central City Opera as Goro in *Madama Butterfly*. On the concert stage he performed with St. Paul Chamber Orchestra as Sellem in *The Rake's Progress*, as tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah* at St. Thomas Church in New York and with Teatro Grattacielo in their production of *The Jewels of Madonna*. This past spring, he appeared with Opera Philadelphia as Monostatos, returned to Pittsburgh Opera as Goro, and sang the four servants in an adaptation of *The Tales of Hoffman* and Belfiore in *La Finta Giardiniera* for Opera Theatre of Pittsburgh. The current season includes appearances with Utah Opera as Pong in *Turandot*. He also joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for their production of *Falstaff*. He will return to Central City Opera as Basilio and as Howard Boucher in *Dead Man Walking*.

Joseph Mechavich* | Conductor

Regarded as a conductor of authority and warmth, Joseph Mechavich is known for the exceptional artistry and infectious energy which he brings to every performance, as well as the personal and career-defining relationships he has forged with a number of opera companies and orchestras. Mechavich presided over Jake Heggie's highly acclaimed opera, *Moby Dick*, for both San Diego Opera and Calgary Opera, as well as productions of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for the Washington National Opera, *Porgy and Bess* for Deutsche Oper Berlin and *Roméo et Juliette* for Florida Grand Opera. Engagements for the 2013-14 season include *La bohème* for Kentucky Opera and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for New England Conservatory of Music, among others. Additional upcoming engagements for 2014 and beyond include the Calgary Opera, Kentucky Opera, San Diego Opera. In 2010, Mechavich was named Principal Conductor of Kentucky Opera. Previously, he held the position of Principal Conductor for Opera Birmingham from 2004-2010, Director of Music for Orlando Opera from 1998-2000 and Cover Conductor for The Santa Fe Opera from 2004-2007.

Daniel Witzke* | Director

German Stage Director Daniel Witzke works extensively in both opera and musical theatre in Europe and the United States. He was originally trained as a professional singer and actor in Vienna, Berlin and Hamburg, pursuing a career onstage. As Staff Director at the Wiener Staatsoper, he was responsible for directing, reviving and assisting on more than 20 productions. International career highlights include

Hamburgische Staatsoper (*La Forza del Destino*), Spoleto Festival USA (*Don Giovanni*) and the Bregenzer Festspiele (*Tosca*). He was appointed Artistic Director for the original German production of Elton John's Broadway-Hit Musical *Aida* in 2003. Beyond his activities in opera and musical theatre, Witzke is one of the most respected and accomplished producers for new American musicals in the German speaking world. With his former production company Big Fish Theatre Productions, he has directed a number of highly acclaimed German premiere productions. Witzke is strongly dedicated to the development and nurturing of new works in both opera and musical theatre and is collaborating with some of the most exciting young writers in the country. He was appointed Resident Director for Seattle Opera in May 2012, and is currently residing in New York City. In the upcoming season he will direct new productions for Opera San Jose, West Bay Opera and Nickel City Opera.

Aida | Verdi | November 7, 10, 13, 15, 2015

Alexandra LoBianco* | Aida

American soprano Alexandra LoBianco has been hailed as possessing "a true Verdian voice of velvet-covered steel," capable of "effortlessly tossing off trills and roulades" (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*). She has been awarded First Prize in the 2013 Altamura International Vocal Competition and was named a First Prize winner of the William Sullivan Foundation 2013 Awards. Since earning first prize at the 2011 Liederkrantz Vocal Competition, and taking first prize and being named "Audience Favorite" at the 2011 Irene Dalis Competition, she has continued to win praise whenever she performs. *San Francisco Classical Voice* noted her "lyrical-to-heroic range," calling to mind "the ease and magnetism of a young Monserrat Caballe." LoBianco's 2013-14 engagements currently include her Opera Santa Barbara debut as Magda Sorel in Menotti's *The Consul*. In 2012-13 she made her European debut in a Verdi concert in Zürich, sang Amelia in *Un ballo in maschera* with Madison Opera and was soprano soloist in Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with Madison Symphony, also with Madison Opera's summer "Opera in the Park" concert series. As a devoted arts educator, she has been a teaching artist, adjudicator and voice teacher, and has mentored thousands of students.

Carl Tanner* | Radames

American tenor Carl Tanner begins the 2013-14 season as Radames in *Aida* at Pittsburg Opera, a role he previously sang at the Metropolitan Opera, Staatsoper Hamburg, Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, Edmonton Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Semperoper Dresden and with the Minnesota Orchestra. He travels to Washington National Opera to make his debut in the role of Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* and later returns to England's Grange Park Opera to appear in the title role *Peter Grimes* in a new production, and also to revive the role of Hermann in *Pique Dame*, a role he inaugurated with great acclaim last season. Future season appearances include return engagements at the Metropolitan Opera and at London's Royal Opera House. Recent successes include Dick Johnson's *La Fanciulla del West* at Opéra Royal de Wallonie in Liege, and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, a role he previously sang at the New National Theatre in Tokyo, at the Greek National Opera and in his debut at the Royal Opera House. He opened the Metropolitan Opera's *Aida* to great public and critical acclaim, and travelled to the United Kingdom to make his debut as Hermann at Grange Park Opera. Other highlights of his career include his appearance in the title role *Samson et Dalila* with Olga Borodina in Amsterdam at the Concertgebouw, a role he later sang at Washington National Opera with Plácido Domingo on the podium.

Catherine Martin* | Amneris

Young mezzo-soprano Catherine Martin has been praised for her "gorgeous warm voice" by *The Washington Post* as she makes an impact in repertoire ranging from Verdi and Wagner to Mozart and Donizetti. She was recently seen reprising her role of Amneris with Opera Santa Barbara in which the *LA Times* said "Martin's Amneris took on enough depth of feeling to ultimately make her the standout of

the performance.” In addition, she was invited to bring her celebrated Amneris to the stage of Houston Grand Opera when she filled in for an indisposed artist this past fall. The 2013-2014 season includes returns to Houston Grand Opera as Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold* and the Glimmerglass Festival as Der Komponist in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, debuts at the Kennedy Center with Washington National Opera as Mary in the premiere of *The Lion, the Unicorn and Me*, as well as joining the National Symphony Orchestra singing Annina, covering Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* and performing Schubert’s “Mirjams Siegesgesang” with the San Antonio Symphony. Future seasons include a debut with the Dresden Staatskapelle. Martin spent three seasons performing with the Houston Grand Opera Studio.

Marco Nistico* | Amonasro

Italian born baritone Marco Nisticò’s impressive combination of beautiful tone, exquisite artistry and superior stagecraft has delighted audiences throughout North America, South America and Europe. Praised as a performer of “gravitas, unforced eloquence, and refined vocalism” by the *Classical Review*, Nisticò has become a widely-sought singing actor for both comedic and dramatic roles. In 2013-14 he returns again to the roster of the Metropolitan Opera for the premiere of Nico Muhly’s *Two Boys*, sings Dulcamara in *L’elisir d’amore* and Dancairo in *Carmen* with Teatro dell’ Opera in Rome, and returns to Sarasota Opera as Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. His 2012-13 season included his return to the Metropolitan Opera as Le Dancaire in *Carmen*, the title role of *Rigoletto* with Sarasota Opera and Montfort in Verdi’s *Les vêpres siciliennes* in a return to the Caramoor Festival. Recent highlights include his return to Sarasota Opera to sing Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* and to Opera New Jersey to sing Di Luna in *Il trovatore*. Other highlights include returning to the Metropolitan Opera for *Carmen* and *La traviata*, Dulcamara in *L’elisir d’amore* in a return to New York City Opera, Germont in *La traviata* with Opera de Puerto Rico and Figaro in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera New Jersey. Recent European engagements include Dulcamara with Landestheater Bregenz and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* with Teatro Regio Torino.

Stefan Szkafarowsky | Ramfis

Returning to Opera Colorado following his 2014 appearance as Count Monterone and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, bass Stefan Szkafarowsky is highly sought after by opera companies and orchestras in this country and abroad. His recent engagements include a return to the Metropolitan Opera to perform the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, as well as *St. Nicholas Mass* at Lincoln Center. He then performed Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* and Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* for Des Moines Opera, Uberto in *La Serva Padrona* at the Macau International Music Festival, the Bonze in *Madama Butterfly* for Los Angeles Opera, Sacristan for Pensacola Opera and Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila* at Savonlinna Opera Festival. Upcoming engagements include a reprisal of his role of the Bonze at the Met and Zaccaria in *Nabucco* for the Lviv Opera House. He has worked under the batons of Plácido Domingo, Michael Lankaster, Mstislav Rostropovich, Leonard Slatkin and Michael Tilson Thomas. Szkafarowsky is a recipient of grants from the Sullivan Foundation, and the Tito Gobbi Award from the Rosa Ponselle Foundation. He is also a regional winner of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions.

Ashraf Sewailam | King of Egypt

The New York Times hailed Egypt native Ashraf Sewailam’s debut at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall as a “stand out performance” and *Opera News* described his voice as “purring and velvety with an easily produced Ramfis-like top range with a majestic tone.” Ashraf made his United States debut in 2004 with Opera Colorado performing the role of Leporello in *Don Giovanni*. Last summer, he performed Alidoro in *Cinderella* with Queensland Opera in Australia. Quickly becoming a house favorite, he has subsequently performed there as Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro* and Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Future engagements include Angelotti in *Tosca* with Lyric Opera Baltimore, a return to San Diego Opera for Un Ballo in *Maschera*, Queeqweg in scenes from

Moby Dick with Fargo-Moorhead Opera, Poo Bah in *The Mikado* with Opera Memphis and Leporello in *Don Giovanni* with Seattle Opera. Recent US performances have included Colline in *La bohème*, Pistola in *Falstaff* and Mandarin in *Turandot* with Seattle Opera, as well as the King in *Aida* and Pizzetti's Murder in the *Cathedral* with San Diego Opera, among others. He earned his Doctorate in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Ari Pelto | Conductor

Please see Ari Pelto's bio with *Madama Butterfly* artists.

David Gately | Director

Stage director David Gately is known for his vivid story-telling and lively and clever productions. Last season his concert staging of *Angels in America* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra was praised for being "brilliantly resourceful" (*This Is London*) and it was reported that "Gately's dynamic semi-staging made a strong argument for a full production of Angels." (*The Independent*) Recent productions of note include his direction of *L'Elisir d'Amore* with Dallas Opera, *Madama Butterfly* with Seattle Opera, *La Bohème* with Florida Grand Opera, *Carmen* in New Orleans, *Les Contes D'Hoffman* in Edmonton, *Die Zauberflöte* with the Cincinnati and Vancouver Operas, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with both the Florentine Opera and Glimmerglass Opera, *Falstaff* with Opera Omaha and *Rigoletto* with Utah Opera. His hugely successful "wild west" production of *Don Pasquale*, which was most recently hailed as a "contemporary classic" by *The Denver Post*, has been mounted by San Diego Opera, Kentucky Opera, Opera Colorado, Calgary Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Virginia Opera, Dayton Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Opera Omaha, Edmonton Opera and the Fort Worth Opera.

The Scarlet Letter | Laitman | May 7, 10, 13, 15, 2016 World Premiere

Elizabeth Futral | Hester Prynne

American soprano Elizabeth Futral has established herself as one of the world's leading sopranos. With her stunning vocalism and vast dramatic range, she has embraced a repertoire that ranges from the Baroque to world premieres. During the 2013-14 season Futral explores an array of diverse repertoire. She creates two world premiere roles: Vera Donovan in Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne* with the San Francisco Opera and Alice B. Toklas in Ricky Ian Gordon's *27* for the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. She will add a Strauss role to her repertoire with Zdenka in Strauss' *Arabella* with the Minnesota Opera, as well as return to a repertoire favorite, *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Portland Opera. American music theatre is featured in her season with a return to the Lyric Opera of Chicago as the Baroness Elsa Schraeder in *The Sound of Music* and to the Houston Grand Opera as Desirée Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music*. With Chicago's Music of the Baroque she performs Haydn's *The Creation* led by Jane Glover at Chicago's Harris Theater and the La Jolla Music Society. Futral appears as Elvira in Kasper Holten's film *Juan* a modern retelling of *Don Giovanni*.

Dominic Armstrong* | Arthur Dimmesdale

Dominic Armstrong has quickly established himself internationally as an artist of superb and distinguished musicality and characterization. He is a winner of the 2013 George London Foundation Vocal Competition. This season, Armstrong debuts with the New York Philharmonic in performances of Britten's Spring Symphony, conducted by Music Director Alan Gilbert. Additionally, he essays his first performance of Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with the Northwest Indiana Symphony, sings the First Jew in *Salome* with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Opera Philadelphia, appears in holiday concerts with the Oregon Symphony, in recital with the Brooklyn Art Song Society, in Mozart's *Requiem* with the Lansing Symphony, with both the Symphony in C and Princeton Symphony for Britten's *Serenade* and in recital with Christine Brewer and Craig Rutenberg. Armstrong has received numerous prizes and awards, including placement as a Grand Finalists in the 2008 National Council Auditions with the Metropolitan

Opera, and with the George London Foundation, the Sullivan Awards, Opera Index, the Gerda Lissner Vocal Competition and the Liederkrantz Art Song Competition (2009 winner). He holds degrees from Truman State University, The Juilliard School and Curtis Institute.

TBA | Roger Chillingworth

Daniel Belcher | Governor Bellingham

Winner of a 2010 Grammy Award, baritone Daniel Belcher has performed in many of the world's music capitals and returns to Opera Colorado following his appearance in 2013 as Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*. With a 50-role repertoire, Belcher has championed roles from the Baroque to those composed expressly for him. He came to international attention in 2004 creating the role of Prior Walter in Peter Eötvös' *Angels in America* for the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Belcher most recently created the role of Robert Kennedy in Robin de Raaff's *Waiting for Miss Monroe* for his debut at The Netherlands Opera and Holland Festival. In the 2013-14 season, Belcher makes his debut with the Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm, Sweden in Kaija Saariaho's *Sombre*. He will also return to Lyric Opera of Kansas City in the role of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, to Opera Omaha as Dandini in *La Cenerentola* and to Utah Opera as Ping in *Turandot*, and he will perform in recital at Houston's Zilkha Hall, among other venues. He received a Robert Jacobson Study Grant from the Richard Tucker Foundation, a Richard F. Gold Career Grant from the Shoshana Foundation for his work with Wolf Trap Opera and the Sullivan Foundation Award. He received the Apprentice Artist Award from the Santa Fe Opera and the Young Artist Award and Outstanding Studio Artist Award from Central City Opera.

Margaret Gawrysiak* | Mistress Hibbons

Margaret Gawrysiak, mezzo-soprano, recently performed Baba the Turk and Mother Goose in *The Rake's Progress*, Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* and La Mère d'Antonia in *Les contes d'Hoffmann* with Wolf Trap Opera, Gertrude/Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, Eunice in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Marzelline in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Virginia Opera, and Frugola in *Il tabarro* and Zita in *Gianni Schicchi* with Maestro Lorin Maazel at the Castleton Festival. Recent engagements included Frugola in *Il tabarro* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and a return to Wolf Trap Opera for Dame Quickly in *Falstaff*. Future engagements include a return to Seattle Opera for Vera Boronel in *The Consul* and Ježibaba in *Rusalka* with North Carolina Opera. Gawrysiak's engagements have also included Giovanna in *Rigoletto* with Florida Grand Opera and a workshop of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys* with the Metropolitan Opera. As a graduate of Seattle Opera's Young Artist Program, she was featured as Dinah in Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin* and Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She was twice a member of the Young American Artists Program at Glimmerglass Opera. In 2009 Gawrysiak won the Sullivan Foundation Award and received second place in the Lotte Lenya Competition.

Kyle Erdos Knapp* | John Wilson

Though he is particularly at home in the florid lyric tenor roles of Mozart, Handel and the bel canto composers, Knapp's versatility allows for a resume that ranges from the psychological complexity of Britten to the comic baritone roles of Gilbert and Sullivan. He will debut as Tobias in *Sweeney Todd* at Hawaii Opera Theatre. He looks forward to returning to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis this spring to sing Father Confessor in *Dialogue of the Carmelites*. His training includes the prestigious Eastman School of Music and the University of Michigan, after which he took part in the inaugural season of the Wolf Trap Opera Studio in 2007 before going on to play ten leading roles over three seasons with the Ohio Light Opera. Knapp is two-time prize winner at the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions and has won the University of Michigan Concerto Competition. He has sung under the batons of Kenneth Kiesler, Martin Katz, Stephen Lord, Michael Borowitz, Benton Hess, Steven Byess and many others. Among the

directors he has worked with are Joshua Major, Steven Daigle, Michael Shell, Ted Christopher and Robin Guarino. He can be heard in leading roles on the Albany Records label on recordings of *Sousa's El Capitan* and Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* and *The Mikado*.

Ari Pelto | Conductor

Please see Ari Pelto's bio with *Madama Butterfly* artists.

Beth Greenberg* | Director

With a curious imagination about new possibilities for 21st-century opera and its productions, stage director Beth Greenberg focuses on new American work and the challenge of redefining where and how opera can be performed. Greenberg has earned a solid reputation for her collaborations with American opera composers. She has been involved in all phases of new work, from libretto development and workshop readings to fully-staged premieres. She recently directed the West Coast premiere of Rorem's *Our Town* which was praised as "a splendid production" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She also staged early workshops of *Before Night Falls* by Jorge Martin and directed the stage premiere of excerpts from Gordon Beeferman's *The Rat Land*, which was twice-featured on City Opera's VOX series. Never shying away from unusual topics, Greenberg directed the world premiere of *Pumped Fiction*, the comic opera by MacArthur genius John Eaton. She has also collaborated with many other American composers including Elliot Goldenthal, John Musto and Mark Adamo. Greenberg also recently taught master classes in New American Arias at SongFest in Malibu. Greenberg won a Fulbright to Berlin where she trained with Gotz Friedrich at the Deutsche Oper. She is currently the Resident Stage Director for Opera Noire of New York and Opera for Humanity.

Lori Laitman | Composer

Lori Laitman is one of America's most prolific and widely performed composers of vocal music. She has composed two operas, an oratorio, choral works and over 250 songs, setting the words of classical and contemporary poets, among them the lost voices of poets who perished in the Holocaust. *The Journal of Singing* has written, "It is difficult to think of anyone before the public today who equals her exceptional gifts for embracing a poetic text and giving it new and deeper life through music." Laitman is currently composing a one-act children's opera with librettist Dana Gioia. This work has been commissioned by the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech to celebrate the opening of the Center. The opera is based on a Grimm's fairy tale, *The Three Feathers*, and the work will premiere October 17, 2014, with director Beth Greenberg. *Vedem*, a Holocaust oratorio, was commissioned by *Music of Remembrance* and premiered in Seattle in May 2010. Laitman continues her work with Music of Remembrance, and their latest commission is for a song cycle based on the poetry of Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, to premiere in May 2014. Laitman and Mason are currently developing *Ludlow*, a new opera based on Mason's award-winning verse novel about the 1914 Colorado mining town disaster.

*Debut Artist

Greg Carpenter | General Director

The fourth General Director in Opera Colorado's 31-year history, Greg Carpenter guides both the artistic and administrative operations of the company. His role as General Director began in 2007, prior to which he served as Opera Colorado's Director of Development from 2004-2007, overseeing all fundraising and Board of Directors activities. Prior to joining Opera Colorado, he worked for four years for the National Symphony Orchestra at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. His work there included Special Projects Manager for the President of the National Symphony Orchestra from 2000 – 2001 and Manager of Development from 2001-2004. Carpenter's extensive experience working in the arts also includes two years as the Arts and Event Services

Manager for the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland and Special Projects Coordinator for the University of Maryland School of Music. From 1986 –1998, Greg Carpenter performed as a professional opera singer. His work as an opera singer included both lead and supporting roles at Glimmerglass Opera, Central City Opera, Sarasota Opera, Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia, Cleveland Opera and Lyric Opera Cleveland. Carpenter currently serves on the Board of Directors for OPERA America, the national service organization for the opera industry. Greg Carpenter received a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from Wittenberg University, a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Michigan State University and he completed post-graduate studies at the University of Maryland School of Music.

About Opera Colorado

A cornerstone of Denver's cultural community, Opera Colorado presents an annual season at its downtown Denver home, the Ellie Caulkins Opera House. The Company presents new works alongside standard repertoire, and reaches more than 35,500 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

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