



Opera Colorado's 2014 Season to Include New Stagings of *Rigoletto* and *Carmen*

"Stories that Sing" Fundraising Campaign Continues, in Support of Performances, Education, and Outreach Initiatives

DENVER, CO—April 12, 2013—Opera Colorado announced today that it will present Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* (March 15, 18, 21, 23) and Georges Bizet's *Carmen* (May 3, 6, 9, 11) as part of its 2014 season. 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, the 2014 season will include a traditional staging of *Rigoletto*, starring acclaimed baritone Gordon Hawkins under the direction of Bernard Uzan and the baton of Leonardo Vordoni, alongside a more contemporary staging of *Carmen*. Updated to 1930s revolutionary Spain, Opera Colorado's intimate production of *Carmen* will bring the orchestra on stage, placing the musicians directly in the midst of the action. Mezzo-soprano Sandra Piques Eddy will sing the title role and Jay Hunter Morris will sing the role of Don José — Hawkins, Eddy, and Morris will be making their Opera Colorado debuts. Additional casting and artistic team announcements for both productions will be forthcoming.

"We're thrilled to be bringing two of opera's most beloved works back to the Opera Colorado stage in productions that celebrate why these works have resonated with audiences so strongly and for so long, and that also incorporate contemporary innovations and viewpoints," said General Director Greg Carpenter. "As we look forward to our 2014 season, we also want to thank the Denver

community for such overwhelming support this year. Our 'Stories that Sing' campaign continues to be successful and important for the Opera's long-term sustainability—we're grateful to those who continue to pledge their support to help keep Opera Colorado a vital part of the Denver community."

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. Part of this reorganization included streamlining to a two-production season for 2013 and 2014, as well as the launch of a \$1.2 million fundraising campaign, "Stories that Sing: Be a Voice for Opera Colorado," in addition to regular, annual fundraising activities. The Opera's initiatives have raised more than \$1.3 million in the first three months of 2013. The "Stories that Sing" campaign continues, and donations may be made at www.operacolorado.org/support.

In addition to its two mainstage productions during the 2014 season, 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—including a traveling, hour-long production of *Carmen* for school age students. The Company will announce its 2014 Young Artists in the coming months.

About *Rigoletto*

Giuseppe Verdi's tale of womanizing, deceit, and revenge, with one of opera's most vivid and compelling characters: a vengeful court jester. Based on Victor Hugo's play *Le Roi s'amuse*, the story focuses on "the curse"—the opera's original title—placed on Rigoletto.

About *Carmen*

Georges Bizet's opera, originally set in 19th-century Spain, traces Don José's ill-fated attraction to the alluring gypsy, Carmen. When Carmen casts off her ardent lover for the handsome toreador, Escamillo, José's intense jealousy turns to vengeance.

About the Artists

Gordon Hawkins, Baritone is critically acclaimed throughout the world for his in-depth interpretations and luxuriant voice. Most recent engagements include Alberich in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the San Francisco Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin; *Der Freischütz* and Alberich in *Das Rheingold* at Teatro de la Maestranza in Seville; Telramund in *Lohengrin* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; Renato in *Un ballo in maschera* at the New Orleans Opera; Crown in *Porgy and Bess* at Cincinnati Opera; and Amonasro in *Aida* at Lyric Opera of Chicago. Mr. Hawkins was a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the Luciano Pavarotti International Vocal Competition, and was awarded the Washington National Opera's 2006 "Artist of the Year" award.

Jay Hunter Morris, Tenor - Originally a country and western music singer, Mr. Morris was first drawn into the opera spotlight in 1995, when he created the role of Tony in Terrence McNally's play *Master Class* at the Philadelphia Theatre Company. Mr. Morris made his debut at The Metropolitan Opera during the 2006-07 Season as Steva in *Jenufa*, and has performed with San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Minnesota Opera, San Diego Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Staatsoper Frankfurt, Tokyo Opera Nomori, Opera Australia, and Seattle Opera, among numerous others. Recent successes include concert performances of Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde* at Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia Valencia and the role of Siegfried in the Metropolitan Opera's new production of the complete Ring Cycle which was broadcast worldwide. Jay Hunter Morris began the 2012-13 season with his appearance in the principal role of Captain Ahab in Jake Heggie's celebrated opera, *Moby-Dick*, at San Francisco Opera and returned to The Metropolitan Opera for revival performances of *The Ring* as Siegfried. Future engagements include his debut as Calaf in *Turandot* and a special appearance in a gala performance that will inaugurate The Opera San Antonio.

Sandra Piques Eddy, Mezzo-Soprano has been praised by the *Boston Globe* for her "extraordinary richness of timbre and expressiveness." The combination of her beautiful tone, artistic sensitivity, and superlative stagecraft have served to make Ms. Eddy one of North America's most highly acclaimed singing actresses. Among Ms. Eddy's most recent successes are her return to the Metropolitan Opera as Mercédès in a new production of *Carmen* and to Boston Lyric Opera as Idamante in *Idomeneo*; the role of Dinah in Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti* with Boston Midsummer Opera; performances as the title role in *La Tragédie de Carmen* with Chicago Opera Theater; the title role in *La Cenerentola* with Austin Lyric Opera and at Spoleto Festival (USA); Charmian in *Antony and Cleopatra* with New York City Opera; the roles of Juno and Ino in *Semele* with Florentine Opera; Romeo in *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi* at Glimmerglass Opera; Cherubino with both Canadian Opera Company and Atlanta Opera; Isabella in *L'italiana in Algeri* with Vancouver Opera; soloist in Beethoven's Mass in C at Spoleto Festival (USA); Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with New York City Opera; Béatrice in *Béatrice et Bénédict* with Chicago Opera Theater; and Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Austin Lyric Opera and the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra.

Bernard Uzan, Director - A native of France, Mr. Uzan has an extensive background in the arts including success as an artists' manager, general director, artistic director, stage director, librettist, designer, actor, and most recently, a published novelist. As a stage director and a producer, Mr. Uzan's productions have graced the stages of 100 opera companies in North America, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and South America with more than 375 productions. He has co-designed more than 50 productions that continue to be seen throughout the world. As a librettist and director, Mr. Uzan collaborated with composer David DiChiera and conductor Mark Flint on the new production of *Cyrano*, which made its world premiere at the Michigan Opera Theatre and Opera Company of Philadelphia to wide acclaim. Mr. Uzan also served as General and Artistic Director for L'Opéra de Montréal from 1988-2002, where he extended the company's repertoire to include more obscure pieces by Menotti and Britten and even brought in new works such as *Therese Raquin* by Tobias Picker and *Nelligan* by Andre Gagnon. While at Montreal Opera, he mounted over 30 new productions that are still in circulation throughout North America today.

Leonardo Vordoni, Conductor - Originally from Trieste, Italy, the fast-rising conductor Leonardo Vordoni studied conducting at the Accademia Pescaresse with Gilberto Serembe, and earned a diploma in opera conducting at Bologna's Reale Accademia Filarmonica. He was a member of the music staff at the Metropolitan Opera and worked on productions including: *L'Elisir d'Amore* (cover

conductor), *Macbeth*, *La traviata*, *Aida*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *La bohème*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Norma*, and *Madama Butterfly*. Collaborations with Edoardo Müller include *L'italiana in Algeri* with Seattle Opera, *La Cenerentola* for Houston Grand Opera, as well as *Il Trovatore* and *Le nozze di Figaro* for San Diego Opera. In recent seasons, Mr. Vordoni conducted *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* at Minnesota Opera, followed by a revival of Dominick Argento's *Casanova's Homecoming*. He made two consecutive debuts in Chicago; first conducting *Le nozze di Figaro* at Lyric Opera of Chicago followed by Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* at Chicago Opera Theatre, and has conducted *La bohème* with Santa Fe Opera and Utah Opera, *Tosca* at Opera on the James, and *Turandot* at Portland Opera, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at Houston Grand Opera, and *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Minnesota Opera.

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.

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