

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT Selina Rajani, 604-331-4824
srajani@vancouveropera.ca

Spine-tingling coloratura soprano Eglise Gutiérrez returns to Vancouver Opera in

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Vancouver, BC ~ Ravishing Cuban-American coloratura soprano **Eglise Gutiérrez**, who thrilled Vancouver audiences as Gilda in 2009's *Rigoletto*, returns to Vancouver Opera in the title role of Donizetti's thrilling masterpiece of madness and murder, **Lucia di Lammermoor**. This grand-opera production will be onstage for four performances only, **December 4 – 11, 2010**, at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

"Ms. Gutiérrez is the full package" raved the *Georgia Straight* in 2009. Reviewers in other cities agree, praising her "liquid phrasing of difficult passages, easy production of pianissimos, note-perfect *acuti* and passionate communication of text." (*Opera News*). "Can the human voice box actually issue the soaring trills that Eglise Gutiérrez emits?" asks the *Florida Sun-Sentinel*. "Gutiérrez's voice swells, ebbs and performs more loop-the-loops than any rollercoaster at Busch Gardens."

Joining her in his VO debut will be rising star tenor **Michael Fabiano** as Edgardo. Mr. Fabiano was seen in 2007's Metropolitan Opera National council auditions documentary *The Audition*. "He sings phenomenally: strong, unforced, in tone, full of swagger...Incredibly, he is just 25." raved *The Times* (London). Canadian baritone **Gregory Dahl**, "an expressive singer blessed with a rich, bold voice" (*Opera Canada*) also returns to the VO stage in his role debut of Enrico.

This production of **Lucia di Lammermoor** features a massive set as imposing and brooding as the Scottish lowlands it conjures. The sloping, raked stage creates a unique forced-perspective that easily fills the large stage of the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

Opening night is **Saturday, December 4, 2010**, with subsequent performances **Tuesday, December 7; Thursday, December 9; and Saturday, December 11**. All performances take place at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Georgia and Hamilton Streets, Vancouver, B.C. and begin at 7:30pm. Tickets are available exclusively at the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre, online at www.vancouveropera.ca or by telephone (604-683-0222). See complete ticket information below.

Turkish-American bass **Burak Bilgili** (Ms. Gutiérrez's real-life husband) returns as Raimondo, for the first time since his towering performances as Banquo in 2006's *Macbeth*. "He is simply sensational," declares Toronto's Classical 96.3FM, "with a thrilling, commanding, passionate voice layered with wonderful phrasing and ease of delivery." Also appearing are tenor **Thomas Macleay** as Arturo, with soprano **Dionne Sellinger** as Alisa and tenor **John Arsenault** as Normanno.

The stage director is prominent Vancouver-based playwright and director **Amiel Gladstone**, in his VO mainstage debut. VO Music Director **Jonathan Darlington** conducts the Vancouver Opera Orchestra and Vancouver Opera Chorus (**Leslie Dala**, Associate Conductor and Chorus Director).

The Story in Brief

Ancient clan hatred leads to madness and murder in Donizetti's thrilling masterpiece of melodic beauty and psychological depth. Lucia loves Edgardo, her family's enemy. With cruel deception, Lucia's brother, Enrico, forces her to marry the wealthy Arturo Bucklaw to save the family from financial ruin. The consequences are devastating: three innocent people die and the bitter feud lives on.

Set in the brooding lowlands of Scotland, **Lucia di Lammermoor's** heartbreaking drama of fatal family dynamics and its portrait of a fragile virtuous woman are profoundly affecting. Passion, romance, filial love, loyalty and betrayal are all expressed in Donizetti's exquisite bel canto score. The climactic "mad scene" is one of the most famous in opera.

Read a full synopsis, listen to a podcast and explore VO's Opera Manga at www.vancouveropera.ca.

Background

Lucia di Lammermoor is based on Sir Walter Scott's famous historical novel *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819). Scott was the first English writer to enjoy an international career during his lifetime. His other well known works include *Rob Roy*, *The Pirate*, and *Ivanhoe*.

Lucia di Lammermoor was first performed on September 26, 1835. Gioachino Rossini had recently retired and Vincenzo Bellini died shortly after the premiere, leaving Donizetti the reigning composer of the Italian music scene. At the time, there was also great interest in the history and culture of Scotland, helping to ensure that **Lucia** opened to great success.

The role of Lucia demands a technically proficient soprano who is capable of singing the difficult "coloratura" (ornamentation of melody) called for in the score. The technique is showcased during Lucia's famous mad scene ("*Il dolce suono...*"), which allows sopranos to add additional trills, runs and other colorations to demonstrate their ability and to excite audiences. Eglise Gutiérrez has joined

the ranks of singers such as Maria Callas and Dame Joan Sutherland, who became celebrated for their performances of this demanding and thrilling role.

Lucia di Lammermoor has been widely referenced in pop culture. It is featured in Martin Scorsese's film *The Departed*, Luc Besson's film *The Fifth Element*, and in Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice*. It has also been used in several Warner Brothers cartoons, in Three Stooges films, and in E.B. White's children's novel, *The Cricket in Times Square*.

Learn More

Opera Speaks @ VPL - Women and Madness: Heroines in Art and Life

Wednesday, November 10

7:00pm – 9:00pm

Alice Mackay Room, Vancouver Public Library Central Branch

Free admission

Lucia di Lammermoor is one of many opera heroines who lose their minds, frequently for love and sometimes because of damaging family dynamics. In this penetrating discussion, a panel of experts looks into what these iconic women characters, and their fictional circumstances, tell us about psychology, gender, and mental health in the modern age. Presented in partnership with Vancouver Public Library.

Film Screening: A Woman Under the Influence

Wednesday, November 24

Doors: 6:30pm • Introduction & Screening: 7:15pm

Vancity Theatre, Vancouver International Film Centre, 1181 Seymour Street

\$11/\$9 senior or student (includes \$2 Vancity Film Centre membership)

One of the seminal films of the seventies, John Cassavetes' wrenching dissection of a blue-collar marriage is a devastating tale of ordinary madness.

Mabel Longhetti (Gena Rowlands) is a housewife and mother, loving and devoted to her family but ill-equipped for the long hours of isolation and solitude that come with the job. Gena Rowlands' portrait of a woman plunged into derangement is one of the most extraordinary performances in all of cinema, while Cassavetes – Rowlands' husband – described this as his "most optimistic" film. Like Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *A Woman Under the Influence* is a tragedy of marriage, family, and madness.

Seating is limited. This special event continues a series of co-presentations between Vancouver Opera and the Vancity Theatre.

Full Ticket Information

Single tickets from \$29 are available from the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre, online at www.vancouveropera.ca, or by phone at 604-683-0222. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted.

Groups: For special pricing for groups of ten or more, call 604-683-0222.

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