

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VANCOUVER OPERA ANNOUNCES 2010-2011 SEASON

Highlights include the world première of a new Canadian opera, the appearance of legendary British director Sir Jonathan Miller, the return of Eglise Gutiérrez, and the Vancouver première of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*

Vancouver, BC ~ The world première of a brand-new VO-commissioned opera, the appearance of the prodigiously talented stage director Sir Jonathan Miller, the return of one of opera's most coveted sopranos, and the Vancouver première of Mozart's rarely-performed *La Clemenza di Tito* are just four highlights of Vancouver Opera's 51st season.

VO's 2010-2011 season will include *Lillian Alling*, by composer John Estacio and librettist John Murrell (October 16 – 23, 2010); Donizetti's moving *Lucia di Lammermoor* (December 4 – 11, 2010); Mozart's final opera, *La Clemenza di Tito* (February 5 – 12, 2011); and Verdi's beloved *La Traviata* (April 30 – May 12, 2011).

"The unveiling of a new Canadian opera, *Lillian Alling*, to launch the 2010-2011 season will be a fitting culmination of our Golden Anniversary celebrations," said **VO General Director James W. Wright**. "I am thrilled to present to Vancouver audiences and to the world this beautiful and captivating new work by Canada's foremost opera-creation team."

Added Wright, "We have been working on *Lillian Alling* with care and love for more than four years, through an extensive creation process that included five workshops. The production is by far the company's largest investment in its fifty-year history and, I believe, a valuable contribution to the future of opera in Canada. I am especially

pleased to bring together a creative team with a proven track record of audience-pleasing new operas filled with tuneful arias, big chorus numbers and lush orchestration, all in the service of a literate and fascinating libretto based on the true-life experiences of a very mysterious woman!"

The most recent – and the final – workshop of the music for *Lillian Alling* took place in December, 2009. Composer John Estacio is currently orchestrating the opera and will complete the score in time for the start of rehearsals in September, 2010.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Lillian Alling - A World Première

Lillian Alling is the fascinating and often harrowing drama – based on legend and a true story – of a Russian immigrant as she crosses the continent on foot in the 1920s from New York City into the rugged landscape of northern British Columbia.

Composer **John Estacio** and librettist **John Murrell** are the creators of the highly-praised *Frobisher* and *Filumena*. The stage director is acclaimed Canadian theatre and opera director **Kelly Robinson** and the set and costume designer is Toronto-based **Sue LePage**. The all-Canadian cast will include superstar mezzo-soprano **Judith Forst**.

Lucia di Lammermoor – The Return of Eglise Gutiérrez

Having stunned audiences with spine-tingling coloratura in 2009's *Rigoletto*, **Eglise Gutiérrez** will be back to perform one of the most difficult roles in the soprano repertoire. "Gutiérrez delivers a ravishing first-act *Caro nome*, and stellar work thereafter," raved the *Vancouver Sun* after her VO debut last season.

Her Lucia has been praised widely, including recently by the *Florida Sun-Sentinel*: "Can the human voice box actually issue the soaring trills that Eglise Gutiérrez emits in the Florida Grand Opera's production of *Lucia di Lammermoor*?...Set amid murder, madness and a blood-stained wedding dress, Gutiérrez's voice swells, ebbs and performs more loop-the-loops than any rollercoaster at Busch Gardens."

Singing alongside her in the role of Raimondo will be Ms.Gutiérrez's husband, celebrated bass-baritone **Burak Bilgili**. Rising American tenor **Michael Fabiano** will sing Edgardo, with Canadian baritone **Gregory Dahl** as Enrico.

The visually splendid production is from San Francisco Opera.

La Clemenza di Tito – Vancouver Opera Première

Canadians rule the stage in the VO première of Mozart's final and most noble opera, *La Clemenza di Tito* (The Clemency of Titus). Juno Award-winning tenor **John Tessier** sings Titus, the Roman emperor whose compassionate nature is a model for modern times. Vitellia is sung by New Brunswick soprano **Wendy Nielsen**. Toronto-based mezzo-soprano **Krisztina Szabó** sings Sesto, and BC soprano **Kathleen Brett**, last seen at VO's Golden Anniversary Concert & Gala, sings Servilia.

The dramatic and innovative sets and costumes are the product of one of the most exciting production teams in opera: stage director **Chas Rader-Shieber** and designer **David Zinn**.

"Zinn's clever set is a white room in classical style with a sliding back panel that can be opened to reveal outside scenes...The four young people are in severe black 18th-century dress in the first act, and after the rebellion against Tito, appear in negative image — tattered white costumes of the same design, a metaphor for their faltering fortunes," raved the *Globe and Mail*.

La Traviata – The VO debut of Sir Jonathan Miller

Directing *La Traviata* will be the inimitable Sir Jonathan Miller, CBE, famed British physician, television presenter, humorist, sculptor, and theatre and opera director. After completing his medical training, Sir Jonathan began his involvement with the stage in 1962 as part of the British comedy revue *Beyond the Fringe*, alongside Peter Cook, Dudley Moore and Alan Bennett.

Since then, Sir Jonathan has enjoyed one of the most stellar careers in modern theatre, directing countless plays (including 11 for the BBC's Shakespeare series) and more than 50 operas at some of the world's most distinguished venues from La Scala to The Metropolitan Opera.

Sir Miller's gorgeous *La Traviata*, a co-production with Glimmerglass Opera, beautifully focuses on the drama of Verdi's beloved drama of passion, intimacy and tragedy.

DATES, STORIES, CASTING DETAILS

Lillian Alling Music by John Estacio and Libretto by John Murrell

Sponsored by Teck

In English with SURTITLES™

October 16, 19, 21, 23, 2010. All performances 7:30pm at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

In 1927, young Lillian Alling arrives at Ellis Island, New York from Russia in desperate search of Jozéf. Penniless, she walks across North America and into the wilds of northwestern BC, following Jozéf's elusive path. During her brave trek, she is embraced

by a Norwegian farming community in North Dakota, incarcerated in Oakalla Prison Farm near Vancouver, and loved by Scotty, a lineman along BC's 'telegraph trail'.

Principal Cast

Lillian: **Frédérique Vézina**
Irene: **Judith Forst**
Scotty: **Aaron St. Clair Nicholson**
Kristian: **Colin Ainsworth**
Directed by **Kelly Robinson**
Set and costume design by **Sue LePage**
Co-produced with The Banff Centre

Lucia di Lammermoor by Gaetano Donizetti

Sponsored by BMO Financial Group

In Italian with English SURTITLES™

December 4, 7, 9, 11, 2010. All performances 7:30pm at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

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 forces her to marry another man to save the family from financial ruin. The consequences are devastating: three innocent people die and the bitter feud lives on.

Principal Cast

Lucia: **Eglise Gutiérrez**
Edgardo: **Michael Fabiano**
Enrico: **Gregory Dahl**
Raimondo: **Burak Bilgili**
Conducted by **Jonathan Darlington**
Directed by **Amiel Gladstone**
Set design by **Gerard Howland**
Co-produced with San Francisco Opera

La Clemenza di Tito by W. A. Mozart

Sponsored by the Vancouver Opera Guild

In Italian with English SURTITLES™

February 5, 8, 10, 12, 2011. All performances 7:30pm at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

Roman Emperor Titus's compassionate nature is severely tested when Vitellia, daughter of the deposed emperor, conspires to have Titus assassinated because he has passed her over as his wife. When the plot fails and the assassin is charged, Titus does not waver from his noble principles, even when Vitellia, now Titus's intended bride, confesses to the crime.

Principal Cast

Tito: **John Tessier**
Vitellia: **Wendy Neilsen**
Servilia: **Kathleen Brett**
Sesto: **Krisztina Szabó**
Conducted by **Jonathan Darlington**
Directed by **Chas Rader-Shieber**
Set and costume design by **David Zinn**

La Traviata by Giuseppe Verdi

Sponsored by Mission Hill Family Estate

In Italian with English SURTITLES™

April 30, May 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 2011. All performances 7:30pm at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

Parisian courtesan Violetta leads a life of wild indulgence until she discovers the love of Alfredo, a true and good-hearted man. When their relationship threatens to disgrace his well-placed family, Alfredo's father privately pressures Violetta to leave, and the couple is torn apart. After bitterness and misunderstanding, they are reunited in forgiveness, but tragically it is too late: Violetta's precarious health fails and Alfredo is left alone.

Principal Cast

Violetta: **Erin Wall**
Alfredo: **David Pomeroy**
Germont: **James Westman**
Conducted by **Jacques Lacombe**
Directed by **Sir Jonathan Miller**
Set and costume design by **Isabella Bywater**
Co-produced with Glimmerglass Opera

SUBSCRIPTIONS & TICKETS

Subscriptions for Vancouver Opera's 2010-2011 season are now on sale at the VO Ticket Centre, 604-683-0222. Renewing subscribers can renew online or by mail, fax, telephone or in person.

Non-subscription tickets to all performances of the four mainstage productions go on sale **August 3, 2010**. Visit www.vancouveropera.ca or call 604-683-0222.

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