

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Vancouver Opera's *EVITA* close to breaking records for VO's fastest-selling show ever!

**Vancouver, BC** ~ Vancouver audiences are eagerly anticipating VO's full-scale premiere of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's smash hit musical *Evita*. Less than two weeks remain until opening night and ticket sales are outpacing any show in the company's history! As of this week, the best selection of tickets is available for the Friday, May 6th evening performance and Sunday, May 8th matinée.

*Evita* is onstage at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, corner of Georgia and Hamilton Streets, Vancouver, B.C. for only 6 performances, April 30 - May 8, 2016. Approximate running time: 3 hours, including 1 intermission.

Saturday, April 30 • 7:30pm  
Sunday, May 1 • 2:00pm matinée  
Thursday, May 5 • 7:30pm  
Friday, May 6 • 7:30pm  
Saturday, May 7 • 7:30pm  
Sunday, May 8 • 2:00pm matinée

Tickets are available exclusively through the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre: 604-683-0222 or [www.vancouveropera.ca](http://www.vancouveropera.ca). Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted. Special pricing for groups of at least 10, and for families, is available by phone.

### ABOUT THE CAST

#### **Ramin Karimloo - Che**

Iranian-born Canadian actor and singer Ramin Karimloo is recognized as a favourite of musical theatre, heralded for his portrayal of Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* and the title role in *Phantom of the Opera*. He was hand-picked by Andrew Lloyd Webber to portray the lead role in *Love Never Dies*, the sequel to *Phantom*. Mr. Karimloo has won the Theatregoer's Choice Award, the Broadwayworld.com award for Best Actor in a musical, the Best Actor award in the Viewers' Choice Theatre Awards at Whatsonstage.com in 2011, and was nominated for a Laurence Olivier Award. In 2014 he was nominated for a Tony Award for his Broadway performances in *Les Misérables*.

His 2011 performance in the 25th anniversary production of *The Phantom of the Opera* at the Royal Albert Hall was streamed live to cinemas across the world, and his 2010 performance in the 25th

Anniversary Concert of *Les Misérables* at The O2 Arena in London has become one of the most widely viewed shows in PBS history.

**Caroline Bowman - Eva Perón**

Caroline Bowman most recently starred as Elphaba in *Wicked* on Broadway. Before that she starred as Eva Perón in the Broadway Revival Tour of *Evita*.

She has been seen on Broadway in the original cast of *Kinky Boots* as well as the national tours of *Spamalot* (Lady Of The Lake), *Fame: The Musical* (Carmen), and *Grease* (Rizzo).

**John Cudia - Perón**

John Cudia is the first and only singer to have performed as both the Phantom and Jean Valjean on Broadway. For his performance of Jean Valjean at Chicago's Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre, he was awarded the Joseph Jefferson Award© for Best Actor in a Musical.

Mr. Cudia has also appeared at some of the most prestigious regional theatres in the United States including The Paper Mill Playhouse, Sacramento Music Circus, North Shore Music Theater, The Pioneer Theater, Portland Stage, and St. Louis Repertory.

Since ending his run in the title role of Broadway's *The Phantom of the Opera* in 2010, Mr. Cudia has studied with Metropolitan Opera baritone Mark Oswald to expand his repertory of lyric tenor roles. He recently made two important debuts: with Lyric Opera of Chicago in their production of *Oklahoma!* and with Lyric Opera of the North as Alfredo in *La traviata*. He appears regularly in concert with The Broadway Tenors and with orchestras across the country.

**Cooper Grodin - Magaldi**

Cooper Grodin was born and raised in Manhattan where he attended LaGuardia High School of Music, Art, and Performing Arts. He earned his Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Wisconsin Madison and received his Masters in Vocal Performance from the Manhattan School of Music. He is an avid singer of all genres and an accomplished pianist, composer, and music director.

Mr. Grodin has starred as The Phantom on national tour in the United States, is an original member of the 25th Anniversary National Tour of *Les Misérables* and has sung in numerous concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Brooklyn Philharmonic, and The American Symphony Orchestra.

He has also performed in the New York premiere of *Grendel* at City Opera, directed by Julie Taymor, and *Zaide* as part of the Mostly Mozart Festival directed by Peter Sellars. Mr. Grodin made his Carnegie Hall debut in Paul McCartney's *Ecce Cor Meum*.

He was awarded a Lys Syonette Award for "Outstanding Performance of an Individual Number" in the Lotte Lenya/Kurt Weill competition and his new original album *It's The Little Things* is now available on iTunes.

### **Shannon Chan-Kent - Perón's Mistress**

Shannon Chan-Kent is best known for her role as the singing voice of Pinkie Pie in *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic*, the speaking voice of Cherry Jam in *Strawberry Shortcake's Berry Bitty Adventures* and the voices of Whitney and Brittany Biskit and Youngmee Song on *Littlest Pet Shop*. She also provides the voice of Silver Spoon on *My Little Pony*, is credited as the voice of Chief in *Pucca* and Misa Amane in the English dubs of the *Death Note* anime and its movies, and portrays Courtney's best friend Janet in Nickelodeon musical film *Spectacular!*

In addition to her voice acting career, she is also an accomplished soprano, having graduated with a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Opera at the University of British Columbia.

### **Conducted by Jonathan Darlington**

VO's Music Director Jonathan Darlington returns to the podium to conduct (**Leslie Dala**, Associate Conductor / Chorus Director).

### **Directed by Kelly Robinson**

Kelly Robinson returns to Vancouver Opera to direct. Mr. Robinson's recent work with VO includes *Don Giovanni*, in 2014, and the 2010 world premiere of *Lillian Alling*.

His award-winning work as a director, dramaturge and choreographer has been seen at the Stratford and Shaw Festivals, the National Arts Centre, CanStage, the Palace Theatre in New York, the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre, Theatre Royal in Plymouth, England, and in London's West End. He has worked with opera companies in Calgary, Portland, Dallas, Minnesota, Montreal and Québec City.

### **Choreographed by Tracey Flye**

Choreographer Tracey Flye returns to the VO stage, having choreographed VO's 2011 production of *West Side Story*. Ms. Flye is one of only a few people in the world who have the credentials to coach *West Side Story*'s original Jerome Robbins choreography. She has choreographed and directed a variety of projects for TV, theatre, fashion and opera.

## **CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM**

Conducted by	Jonathan Darlington
Directed by	Kelly Robinson
Choreographer	Tracey Flye
Eva Perón	Caroline Bowman
Che	Ramin Karimloo
Perón	John Cudia
Magaldi	Cooper Grodin
Perón's Mistress	Shannon Chan-Kent

Chorus Director /	
Associate Conductor	Leslie Dala
Scenic & Costume Designer	Drew Facey
Lighting Designer	Gerald King
Projection Designer	Jamie Nesbitt
Sound Design	Andy Horka
Wig Designer	Stacey Butterworth
Associate Wig Designer	Susan Manning
Principal Répétiteur /	
Assistant Chorus Director	Kinza Tyrrell
Musical Preparation	Tina Chang, Kimberley-Ann Bartczak *
Stage Manager	Theresa Tsang

\* Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program Participant

## THE STORY IN BRIEF

Set in the politically turbulent 1930s and 1940s, *Evita* follows Eva Duarte's remarkable journey from small-town slums to the tango clubs of Buenos Aires, through a career in B movies and radio dramas, and to the presidential palace on the arm of her new husband, General Juan Perón. Fearlessly aggressive in defending the rights of workers and the poor, Eva attracted the wrath of the aristocracy and the universal love of the people. Her legend lives on, decades after her death in 1952 at age 33, even as her role in Argentina's history is revealed with increasing clarity as time goes on. Read a full synopsis at [www.vancouveropera.ca](http://www.vancouveropera.ca).

## BACKGROUND

Not unlike its central character, the globally-successful musical *Evita* arose from relatively humble beginnings.

The work first began life in 1976 as a concept album, and was a collaboration between composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and librettist Tim Rice. The pair had previously worked together on *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* and elected to part after *Evita* owing to personal differences.

*Evita's* original 1978 West End production played 3,176 times, and won the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Musical, with Elaine Paige in the title role. When the work premiered on Broadway the following year, it ran for 1,567 performances, and won a Tony Award for Best Musical, with Patti LuPone as Eva.

There have been over twenty full-scale professional productions of the piece in the years since, including ten American tours and a production in 2010 at the Stratford Festival. There have also been over 48 cast recordings released, including ones in Japanese, Hebrew, Dutch and German. *Evita* was

also adapted into a feature-length motion picture in 1996, with direction by Alan Parker, and Madonna in the starring role.

#### FULL TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets are available from the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre, online at [www.vancouveropera.ca](http://www.vancouveropera.ca), or by phone at 604-683-0222. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted. Groups: For special pricing for groups of at least 10, or for family pricing, call 604-683-0222.

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VO's 2015-2016 Season is generously sponsored by Goldcorp.  
*Evita* Production Sponsor: BMO