

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Star soprano Joyce El-Khoury set to charm Vancouverites in deliciously funny
DIE FLEDERMAUS
Sparkling production's cast includes dashing tenor Roger Honeywell and
the delightful Christopher Gaze

Vancouver, BC ~ Are you ready to waltz? Rehearsals are underway for VO's rollicking production of *Die Fledermaus*, onstage for four performances only at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Vancouverites are in for a treat as the all-Canadian cast gets ready to make audiences laugh with mistaken identities, hypnosis by pocket watch, plenty of bubbly, and of course, the delightful music of Johann Strauss Jr.

Don't miss the party! *Die Fledermaus* is onstage from **Saturday, February 28 to Sunday, March 8, 2015:**

Saturday, February 28 • 7:30pm
Thursday, March 5 • 7:30pm
Saturday, March 7 • 7:30pm
Sunday, March 8 • 2:00pm matinée

All performances at the **Queen Elizabeth Theatre**, corner of Georgia and Hamilton Streets, Vancouver, B.C.

Die Fledermaus will be sung in German with English dialogue, with English translations projected above the stage. Approximate running time: 3 hours 27 minutes (including two 20-minute intermissions).

Tickets are available exclusively through the **Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre:**
604-683-0222 or www.vancouveropera.ca. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted.
Special pricing for groups of 10 or more is available by phone.

Follow Vancouver Opera on Twitter and Facebook for exclusive offers such as VO's Get O.U.T (Opera Under 35) program, with **\$35 tickets for patrons aged under 35.**

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

This rollicking production features **Roger Honeywell**, last seen on the VO stage in 2013's *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* and in 2012's *The Pirates of Penzance*. VO is very pleased to welcome star soprano **Joyce El-Khoury** to the Queen Elizabeth Theatre for her Vancouver début after recent appearances in London and Amsterdam. **Christopher Gaze** rounds out the cast, having delighted VO audiences alongside Mr. Honeywell as the Major-General in *The Pirates of Penzance*. VO's Music Director **Jonathan Darlington** returns to the podium to conduct in his first appearance of the 2014-2015 season. **Nancy Hermiston**, O.C., chair of the Voice and Opera Divisions at UBC School of Music, directs the action.

Conducted by Jonathan Darlington
Directed by Nancy Hermiston, O.C.

Rosalinde	Joyce El-Khoury
Adele	Suzanne Rigden
Gabriel von Eisenstein	Roger Honeywell
Prince Orlovsky	Julie Boulianne
Alfred	David Pomeroy
Dr. Falke	Hugh Russell
Frosch	Christopher Gaze, O.B.C
Frank	Andrew Greenwood
Ida / Orlovsky Understudy	Laurelle Jade Froese *
Dr. Blind	Martin Sadd •
Ivan / Falke Understudy	Zachary Read *

Choreographer	Eva Tavares
Assistant Conductor/ Chorus Director	Kinza Tyrrell
Lighting Designer	Gerald King
Wig Designer	Stacey Butterworth
Stage Manager	Theresa Tsang
Assistant Director	Brenna Corner *

Alfred Understudy	Rocco Rupolo *
Adele Understudy	Caitlin Wood *

* Member of the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program

• Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program Alumnus

Rising star soprano **Joyce El-Khoury** makes her Vancouver début as Rosalinde, the wife of the wealthy Gabriel von Eisenstein. Ms. El-Khoury's career was launched with training from the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. She has since gone on to be nominated for an International Opera Award for her studio recording and concert performance of Donizetti's rarely-heard *Belisario* with Opera Rara and Sir Mark Elder at London's Barbican Hall. Ms. El-Khoury worked closely with Lorin Maazel, with performances as Desdemona in *Otello*, Laretta in *Gianni Schicchi* and several concert appearances. This season, she will sing with Dutch National Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis and at the Savolinna Festival.

Tenor **Roger Honeywell** returns to the VO stage two years after moving audiences with a haunting performance as the Prince in the Canadian premiere of Tan Dan's *Tea: A Mirror of Soul*. The multi-talented tenor draws upon his impeccable comic timing and flair for the absurd as Gabriel von Eisenstein, the socialite who is to be sent to prison for insulting a tax official. Audiences were treated to Mr. Honeywell's charm and exuberance as Frederic in 2012's *The Pirates of Penzance*. "In a role that can so easily go so wrong, Honeywell offers charm — boyish, of course — a hint of knowing irony, and stylish singing from opening scene to the obligatory happy ending. He's perfect," raved the *Vancouver Sun*.

Canadian soprano **Suzanne Rigden** sings Adele, cheeky maid to the Eisensteins. Ms. Rigden has made her mark on the international stage with a dazzling combination of stratospheric coloratura and comic genius. She has sung across North America, in Europe and Israel and was a semi-finalist in competitions in France and China.

Canadian mezzo-soprano **Julie Boulianne** was last seen on the VO stage as Stéphano in 2011's *Roméo et Juliette*. Ms. Boulianne recently made her Metropolitan Opera début, singing alongside Plácido Domingo in *Iphigénie en Tauride*. ATMA recently released her first solo recording, a rarely recorded chamber version of Mahler's two famous song cycles: *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and *Kindertotenlieder*.

Tenor **David Pomeroy** was last seen on the VO stage as Cavaradossi in 2013's *Tosca*. He made his Metropolitan Opera début in the title role of *Les contes d'Hoffmann* opposite soprano Anna Netrebko under the baton of Maestro James Levine.

Baritone **Hugh Russell**, returning to VO for the first time since 2008's *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, is acclaimed for his charisma, dramatic energy and vocal beauty. He is particularly known for his concert appearances of *Carmina Burana*. "[He] grasped the theatrical nature of Orff's work, nearly stealing the show with a voice that ranged from organ-deep rumbles to flute-like falsetto — and an acting style that drew roars of laughter as he captured the bullishness of an intoxicated medieval abbot," raved the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

Best known as Artistic Director of Vancouver's Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival, **Christopher Gaze** has performed in England, the USA and across Canada. He trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School before coming to Canada in 1975 where he spent three seasons at the Shaw Festival. In 1990 he founded Bard on the Beach. Mr. Gaze's voice is heard regularly in cartoon series, commercials and on the radio. He also hosts Vancouver Symphony's popular *Tea & Trumpets* series and their annual Christmas concerts. Mr. Gaze directed VO's 2012 production of *The Pirates of Penzance* and appeared on stage as the Major-General in the same production.

Vancouver baritone **Andrew Greenwood** sings Frank, the prison governor. Mr. Greenwood has sung in Germany, the Czech Republic, Switzerland and Prague. He has earned high praise for his "engaging personality [which] captured the imagination as he sang...With a powerful voice, he gave the impression he was singing for friends and that he loved doing it. He just sang and left hundreds of people feeling privileged to have heard him." (*Kamloops This Week*).

Mezzo-soprano **Laurelle Jade Froese** sings Ida; tenor **Martin Sadd** sings Dr. Blind, and baritone **Zachary Read** sings Ivan. Ms. Froese and Mr. Read are participants in this year's Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program; Mr. Sadd is an alumnus of the program.

Eva Tavares is the choreographer for this production of *Die Fledermaus*. Ms. Tavares is also a soprano and sang Harry in VO's 2013 production of Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring*.

VO's Music Director **Jonathan Darlington** returns to the podium to conduct (**Kinza Tyrrell**, Assistant Conductor / Chorus Director). The stage director is **Nancy Hermiston**. Ms. Hermiston's performing career took her throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. Since then, she has held numerous appointments as voice teacher and stage director. In 1995, she joined the University of British Columbia's School of Music as Head of the Voice and Opera Division, where she established the UBC Opera Ensemble.

THE STORY, IN BRIEF

In high society Vienna every night is party night! At a lavish soirée hosted by Prince Orlovsky, the champagne flows, fuelling an elaborate trick by the dapper Dr. Falke to repay his friend Gabriel von Eisenstein for having abandoned him one night, dressed as a bat. Eisenstein's maid, Adele, appears as the exotic "Miss Olga". The prison governor, Frank, is the "Chevalier Chagrin". And Eisenstein's wife, Rosalinde, in disguise as a mysterious Hungarian countess, bamboozles him into trying to seduce her. The evening winds down at the city jail, where true identities are revealed, transgressions are forgiven, and everyone raises one more glass of champagne.

Lighthearted, romantic, and wickedly funny, *Die Fledermaus* has the power to lift our spirits. Strauss's melody-filled music, especially his famous waltzes, is effervescent and intoxicating. Be prepared to laugh!

BACKGROUND

Johann Jr. (1825-1899) was the second Strauss to carry the mantle "Waltz King." His father (1804-1849), along with another Viennese composer and orchestra leader, Joseph Lanner, developed what became universally and instantly recognizable as the Viennese waltz. Strauss father and son presided over a concert and dance scene in Vienna almost beyond imagining today: ballrooms that dotted the city were regularly crammed with dance-mad citizens swirling to the highly infectious music and idolizing the charismatic bandmasters.

In his highly successful career, Strauss Jr. wrote hundreds of waltzes and other dances before his first wife, Jetty, prodded him into writing for the operatic stage. *Die Fledermaus* was by far his most successful effort.

In this work, Strauss's irresistible music masks a biting critique of Viennese society – a critique that caused something of a scandal at the time of its premiere in 1874. Bored and rich Prince Orlovsky, for example, is a stark representation of the decadent upper classes of the time. But this theme is not dominant. However dishonest or duplicitous the characters, their actions are propelled by the most lighthearted and carefree music, powerful in its ability to lift our spirits and to make us laugh.

About Vancouver Opera

Vancouver Opera is the second largest opera company in Canada. It is regarded worldwide for its fine mainstage productions; for its country-leading education programs, which have reached more than 1.6 million children and their families in more than 40 years; for its innovative and award-winning community programs; and for forging groundbreaking cross-cultural creative partnerships that have brought opera to new generations of Canadians. Visit www.vancouveropera.ca to find out more.

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