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Back by popular demand: VO's acclaimed First Nations-inspired

**THE MAGIC FLUTE**

Enhanced production includes new HD projections

Vancouver, BC ~ Back by popular demand, and enhanced with new state-of-the-art design elements, VO's breathtaking First Nations-inspired production of *The Magic Flute* will be onstage at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre for six performances only, March 9 - 17, 2013. Opening night is **Saturday, March 9, 2013** with subsequent performances **Sunday, March 10 (matinee); Tuesday, March 12; Thursday, March 14; Saturday, March 16** and **Sunday, March 17 (matinee)**. Evening performances are at 7:30pm. Matinee performances begin at 1:30pm.

All performances take place at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Georgia and Hamilton Streets, Vancouver, B.C. Tickets are available exclusively through the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre, online at [www.vancouveropera.ca](http://www.vancouveropera.ca) or by telephone (604-683-0222). See complete ticket information below.

"A great many people have been asking us to remount our highly successful 2007 production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*," said VO General Director **James Wright**. "We are delighted to be working again with our First Nations partners – with whom we created the original production during a three-year collaborative process – in presenting this effective combination of European tradition and ancient west coast mythology and imagery, in a production that is truly "of this place". We are particularly grateful for the continuing guidance and support of First Peoples' Cultural Council."

VO's innovative production transforms the **Queen Elizabeth Theatre** into the powerful realm of Coast Salish territory. The original production, staged in 2007, was developed in consultation with an advisory panel of First Nations leaders and artists. This production, which includes the original costume and set designs, adds updated video-design elements that use the latest in HD projection technology, as well as substantial revisions to the original costumes and sets.

The human figures, animals and supernatural creatures of coastal First Nations' mythology bring a freshness to Mozart's beloved opera. Mozart's music remains unchanged, set to a libretto in English, by stage director Robert McQueen, that incorporates words from the ḥə́n̓qəm̓iḥ̓ə́m̓ language, with permission of the Musqueam nation.

### THE ORIGINAL CREATIVE TEAM

A dynamic team of artists and designers has created the stunning sets and costumes. Scenic design is by **Kevin McAllister** and scenic design consultant **Carey Newman** (Kwak waka wakw First Nation). Costumes are co-designed by **John Powell** (Kwak waka wakw) and **Christine Reimer**. Choreography is by **Michelle Olson** (Han), with guidance from Cultural Dance Advisor **Bob Baker** (Squamish). Additional key creative contributions have been made by Cultural Advisor, Staging **Marlena Dolan** (Cree) and by interns **Lance Cardinal** (Scenic Design; Cree), **Sharifah Marsden** (Costume Construction; Ojibway/Micmac), and **Debra Sparrow** (Costume Design; Musqueam).

**Robert McQueen** returns to VO to direct this production. As the director of the original 2007 production, Mr. McQueen was instrumental in the creation process of this unique *Magic Flute*.

New and updated visuals have been created for this production by the original team of **Sean Nieuwenhuis** (Projections) and **Alan Brodie** (Lighting). Joining them is **Tobie Caplette** (Métis), assistant videographer. This production will be the first to use VO's two newly-acquired HD projectors.

*The Magic Flute* is sung in English, with English SURTITLES™ projected above the stage. Spoken dialogue is in English and in ḥə́n̓qəm̓iḥ̓ə́m̓, a dialect of the Musqueam language. VO's Chorus Director and Associate Conductor **Leslie Dala** will lead the VO Orchestra. Mr. Dala was last seen in the orchestra pit as conductor of 2012's *La Bohème*.

### THE CAST

Tamino will be sung by Juno Award-winning tenor, and frequent VO artist, **John Tessier**. "Tessier has an international reputation as the perfect light lyric tenor," praised *The Globe and Mail*. "He has beautiful clarity of tone and hits seemingly effortless high notes, and over the years he has grown into a terrific actor to boot." Mr. Tessier has worked with Plácido Domingo, Itzhak Perlman, Dame Gwyneth Jones and several other notable musicians and has sung internationally. He was last seen on the VO stage in the title role of 2011's *La Clemenza di Tito*.

BC soprano **Layla Claire** will make her Canadian operatic début in the role of Pamina. Praised for her "penetrating purity" (*New York Times*), Ms. Claire was a member of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at The Metropolitan Opera, has taken prizes at the Palm Beach Opera competition and the George London Foundation Competition, and was recently featured in documentaries for PBS and the BBC.

Baritone **Joshua Hopkins** will sing Papageno. Winner of the 2006 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award and the Verbier Festival Academy's 2008 Prix d'Honneur, Joshua Hopkins has been hailed for his "gorgeous voice, a voice with gold in it. ...[T]his young Hopkins is one of those golden singers, and he filled the Koch Theater with this gold, this glow." (*The New Criterion*). Mr. Hopkins was last seen on the VO stage as Figaro in 2012's acclaimed *The Barber of Seville*.

Canadian bass **Phillip Ens** will sing Sarastro. Mr. Ens made his operatic debut in 1985 with Manitoba Opera and has since sung with opera companies across the country as well as in Philadelphia, Denver, Austin and the Bayerische Staatsoper. He has also appeared with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Edinburgh and Salzburg Festivals, and the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome.

The Queen of the Night will be sung by Canadian lyric coloratura soprano **Teiya Kasahara**. Ms. Kasahara is becoming known to audiences for her "flair for drama and blazing high notes" (*La Scena Musicale*). She is quickly rising as a versatile artist in the world of opera, oratorio and art song with her "brilliant coloratura voice" (*Opera Canada*). She has previously sung in VO's *Voices of the Pacific Rim* concerts. This will be Ms. Kasahara's mainstage debut.

Newfoundland tenor **Michael Barrett** will sing Monostatos. Mr. Barrett is a former member of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio and has sung in Toronto, Newfoundland and Edmonton. He regularly appears with the Aldeburgh Connection. This will be Mr. Barrett's VO debut.

The Three Ladies will be sung by First Nations artists. Métis soprano **Melody Mercredi** will sing the First Lady and will also be cover for the Queen of the Night. Ms. Mercredi sang the Queen in the Vancouver Opera In Schools' touring production of *The Magic Flute: Quest for the Box of Shadows* and made her VO mainstage debut as Barbarina in 2010's *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Kwakiutl soprano **Leah Alfred** will sing the Second Lady. Ms. Alfred studied opera at UBC, appearing in UBC Opera's production of *Louis Riel*, and performing with the VSO. She currently studies at the University of Victoria. This will be Ms. Alfred's mainstage debut.

Kwak waka wakw mezzo-soprano **Marion Newman** will sing the Third Lady, as she did in the 2007 production. She has been praised as a "show stealer" (*BBC Music Magazine*) for her "distinctive, dusky voice" (*Toronto Star*). Ms. Newman has sung in Italy, the Czech Republic, Germany and France and has made several recordings with the Aradia Ensemble for Naxos.

Mezzo-soprano **Sylvia Szadovszki** will sing Papagena. Ms. Szadovszki is a graduate of the University of British Columbia and the Manhattan School of Music. She has performed with the European Music Academy (Czech Republic), Mountain View Festival of Song (Alberta), Artistic Repertory Theater (Florida), Spoleto Vocal Arts Symposium and International Lyric Academy of Rome. Ms. Szadovszki is a member of VO's Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program and was last seen on the VO stage as Kate in 2012's *The Pirates of Penzance*.

## THE STORY IN BRIEF

On a quest for love and enlightenment, young Tamino finds himself at the centre of a battle between the forces of light and darkness. Accompanied by an absurdly lovelorn bird catcher, Papageno, and protected by his spirit-guide, Sarastro, Tamino confronts the formidable Queen of the Night, bravely endures terrifying trials, and is finally united in love with his beloved Pamina.

## BACKGROUND

*The Magic Flute* is the most unusual of Mozart's operas. On one level, it is a romantic story of lovers in jeopardy, enjoyable by audiences of all ages. On another level, it is an allegorical tale of the quest for life's meaning, subject to more interpretations than any opera outside of the canon of Wagner. The recurrence of the number three (three trials, Three Ladies, Three Spirits, three priests) in the narrative is echoed musically by Mozart's sublime score, leading to many political and spiritual interpretations of the deceptively simple story. Ultimately, analysis matters not, as the music is some of Mozart's finest, with exalted arias existing in harmony with heartfelt love songs; outrageously silly buffa pieces and hair-raising coloratura passages.

Adapted by director Robert McQueen, in consultation with a panel of First Nations artists, the legends and traditions of BC's coastal First Nations proved ideal for providing a fresh look at Mozart's work. Coastal traditions dictate equality of the sexes, allowing McQueen to eliminate much of the language criticized as sexist in recent years. As well, the "trickster" archetype of First Nations legend allows for a wider appreciation of the characters of The Queen of the Night and Sarastro, as each

contains the duality of good and evil. Sarastro's followers are clothed in representative dress of BC's 10 coastal Nations, and his three priests, or "siem," represent spiritual figures in the Coast Salish tradition. The set design represents the three planes of land, water and air central to First Nations mythology, which is echoed in the symbolic movements of the five dancers.

## LEARN MORE

### Opera Speaks: First Nations Artists and Opera: A powerful meeting of creative forces

Tuesday, February 12, 2013

7:00 - 9:00pm

Alice MacKay Room, Lower Level

Central Library, 350 West Georgia Street

Admission is free. Seating is limited.

Beginning almost a decade ago, Vancouver Opera and First Nations artists, designers and cultural experts came together to create a breathtaking new production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, set in the powerful realm of Coast Salish territory. Before the opening of a much-anticipated remounting of that production, key First Nations and opera collaborators come together to explore the inner workings of this remarkably successful experiment.

Gain insight into the dance and gesture, design, and the ɬəŋqəmíəmə language that have enriched this respectful rendering of Mozart's great work.

Speakers include interdisciplinary artist **Dana Claxton**, mezzo-soprano **Marion Newman**, and stage director **Robert McQueen**. Moderated by **Cathi Charles Wherry**.

Produced in collaboration with the First Peoples' Cultural Council.

### *The Magic Flute* Film Screening

Thursday, February 21, 2013

7:45pm

Vancity Theatre

1181 Seymour St (at Davie)

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

VO's Film Series continues with this special screening of **Ingmar Bergman's** classic 1975 film version of *The Magic Flute*, presented in association with VO's production.

Ingmar Bergman had a lifelong passion for Mozart's *The Magic Flute* since seeing it onstage as a 12-year-old boy, and attempting to mount his own puppet theatre edition back at home (a plan thwarted because he couldn't afford a complete recording of the opera).

Four decades later, he was finally able to realise his dream, directing it for Swedish television in a mock up of Stockholm's baroque Drottningholm Theatre. The film was screened in cinemas across the globe and became one of Bergman's most beloved works.

This screening will feature an introduction by *Magic Flute* stage director **Robert McQueen**.

Robert McQueen's recent productions include *Caroline, or Change* (nominated for a Dora Award), *The Light in the Piazza*, *Capriccio*, *La bohème* with Canadian Opera Company, *Carousel*, and *Where Elephants Weep* in Cambodia.

Most recently, Mr. McQueen directed a workshop of *When the Sun Comes Out* by composer Leslie Uyeda and librettist Rachel Rose and will be directing *Ariadne Auf Naxos* for Pacific Opera Victoria.

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

### Full Ticket Information

Tickets to *The Magic Flute* are available now 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 ten or more, call 604-683-0222.

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VO's 2012-2013 Season is generously sponsored by Goldcorp.

This production of *The Magic Flute* is sponsored by YVR.