

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VANCOUVER OPERA ANNOUNCES 2015-2016 SEASON

Exciting season includes a powerful Canadian premiere, two opera favourites and a globally popular musical

Vancouver, BC ~ A powerful and current Canadian premiere, two favourites of grand opera and a modern classic of musical theatre are highlights of Vancouver Opera's 56th season.

The 2015-2016 season will open with Giuseppe Verdi's dark and tragic **Rigoletto** (September 26 - October 4, 2015), followed by the Canadian premiere of Oscar-nominated composer Nico Muhly's **Dark Sisters**, a thought-provoking exploration of polygamy in a renegade Mormon community (November 26 - December 12, 2015, at the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre). VO then presents Giacomo Puccini's heartbreakingly beautiful **Madama Butterfly** (March 5 - 13, 2016) and closes the season with a treat for lovers of musical theatre: the company premiere of **Evita**, by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber (April 30 - May 8, 2016).

The season will also include the much-anticipated school tour of **Stickboy**, VO's ground-breaking opera about bullying, by Neil Weisensel and Shane Koyczan, which had its world premiere in October 2014 and is being adapted into a one-hour version that will tour high schools throughout Metro Vancouver and beyond.

"In 2015-2016 we invite our community to enjoy a variety of thrilling theatrical experiences that will connect with them deeply," said VO's General Director, **James W. Wright**. "That connection can be felt in many ways: through classic traditional operas, through performances in a more intimate venue, and through popular works of musical theatre with compelling themes and stories, presented full-scale with all the resources an opera company can muster."

Added Wright, "The two 'classics', *Rigoletto* and *Madama Butterfly*, are perfect for newcomers and seasoned opera-goers alike. We present the Canadian premiere of *Dark Sisters*, by one of the hottest composers in North America, in the intimate surroundings of the Playhouse Theatre, which proved to be so effective for *Stickboy* this season. And we are excited to present a full-scale production of *Evita*. Based on the overwhelming response to 2011's *West Side Story*, and the excitement that is building for this season's *Sweeney Todd*, in April/May, we know that Vancouver audiences appreciate the gems of musical theatre produced on a scope and scale that people could experience only by traveling to New York or London."

DATES, STORIES, CASTING DETAILS

RIGOLETTO

Tuneful. Dramatic. Tragic.

by Giuseppe Verdi

Production sponsored by Mission Hill Family Estate

Saturday, September 26, 2015

Thursday, October 1

Saturday, October 3

Sunday, October 4 • matinée

Evening performances 7:30pm. Matinée performance 2:00pm.

All performances at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™ projected above the stage

Conducted by Jonathan Darlington

Directed by Nancy Hermiston

Rigoletto is a court entertainer with a vicious tongue and a soft spot: he is hiding his vulnerable young daughter, Gilda, from the harsh world he inhabits. But his worst fear becomes reality: she is discovered by his boss, the predatory Duke of Mantua. When the Duke seduces Gilda, Rigoletto hires a hitman to kill him. It doesn't work: Gilda has fallen in love, and she would rather die than see the Duke hurt.

Rigoletto is one of Verdi's greatest achievements, powered with irresistible melodies, heartbreaking drama, and vivid characters: the cruel clown with a hidden heart, the morally bankrupt duke, the innocent Gilda, the sinister assassin and his voluptuous sister.

Featuring the return of sensational soprano **Simone Osborne** (*The Magic Flute, Roméo et Juliette*) and baritone **Gordon Hawkins** (*Tosca*).

DARK SISTERS

Powerful. Current. Thought-provoking.

Canadian premiere! New Production!

By Nico Muhly

Libretto by Stephen Karam

Thursday, November 26, 2015

Friday, November 27

Saturday, November 28

Thursday, December 3
Friday, December 4
Saturday, December 5
Sunday, December 6 • matinée
Thursday, December 10
Friday, December 11
Saturday, December 12

Evening performances 7:30pm. Matinée performance 2:00pm.

All performances at the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre
Sung in English with SURTITLES™ projected above the stage
Conducted by Kinza Tyrrell
Directed by Amiel Gladstone

In a renegade Mormon community of the American southwest, brave Eliza attempts to escape her life as one of 5 “sister wives” in a polygamous marriage and save her daughter from the same fate. The women’s children have been removed by state authorities and their husband, known as the Prophet, has retreated to the desert, seeking divine guidance. In desperation, the women subject themselves to the glare of the media. While the world watches on television, Eliza bares her heart, unleashes her condemnation of the community’s patriarchy, and pleads with her sister wives to break free.

Composer Nico Muhly is one of the hottest young composers in North America. He has written choral works, large and small orchestral pieces, and 3 film scores, including *Joshua* and the Oscar-nominated *The Reader*. After the success of *Dark Sisters* in New York and Philadelphia in 2011 and 2012, his opera *Two Boys* had its Metropolitan Opera debut. His *Dark Sisters* score is lyrical, evocative and spare, highlighting the women’s voices and revealing their fervency and suffering.

MADAMA BUTTERFLY

Beautiful. Heartbreaking. Unforgettable.
by Giacomo Puccini

Saturday, March 5, 2016
Sunday, March 6 • matinée
Thursday, March 10
Friday, March 11
Saturday, March 12
Sunday, March 13 • matinée

Evening performances 7:30pm. Matinée performances 2:00pm.

All performances at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Sung in Italian with English SURTITLES™ projected above the stage

Directed by Michael Cavanagh

In Nagasaki at the turn of the 20th century, a pleasure-seeking American naval officer named Pinkerton leases a house and marries a young geisha. He is only briefly enchanted with his “Butterfly”, but she is totally and forever committed to the marriage. When he abandons her and then, years later, returns to claim their child, Butterfly is devastated and makes a supreme sacrifice, in devotion to her ancestors.

Puccini’s incomparably gorgeous opera never fails to give audiences a deep emotional experience.

Breathtaking soprano **Mihoko Kinoshita** returns to sing the title role.

EVITA

Compelling. Universal. Legendary.

Company premiere! New production!

Lyrics by Tim Rice

Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber

Saturday, April 30, 2016

Sunday, May 1 • matinée

Thursday, May 5

Friday, May 6

Saturday, May 7

Sunday, May 8 • matinée,

Evening performances 7:30pm. Matinée performances 2:00pm.

All performances at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Sung in English with English SURTITLES™ projected above the stage

Directed by Kelly Robinson

Winner of 7 Tony Awards™ including Best Musical, *Evita* is the story of the charismatic and controversial Eva Perón, whose beauty and ambition vaulted her from poverty to power as the First Lady of Argentina.

Set in the politically turbulent 1930s and 1940s, *Evita* follows Eva’s remarkable journey from small-town slums to the tango clubs of Buenos Aires, through a career in B movies, and to the presidential palace on the arm of her new husband, General Juan Perón. Fearless 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.

We are proud to present a full-scale production of this modern classic of musical theatre. Lloyd Webber artfully drew on choral forms, Latinate rhythms and contemporary ballads to create a compelling work. “No composer since Puccini has managed to write tunes that adhere so insistently to the memory,” said *The New York Times*.

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. Its mission is to be the destination performing arts organization that entertains, stimulates and enriches British Columbians, driven by programming that redefines “Opera” and revolutionizes its accessibility and community value.

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