FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE March 29, 2011
CONTACT Selina Rajani, 604-331-4824
srajani@vancouveropera.ca

Legendary director, humourist, writer and medical expert
Sir Jonathan Miller
directs Vancouver Opera’s

LA TRAVIATA

Vancouver, BC ~ This spring, Vancouverites will experience a rare event: Verdi’s most popular opera, La Traviata, directed by Sir Jonathan Miller, one of this century’s most beloved humourists and satirists and now one of the world’s most imaginative theatre and opera directors. La Traviata is on-stage for six performances only, April 30 – May 12, 2011, at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

Opening night is Saturday, April 30, 2011, with subsequent performances Tuesday, May 3; Thursday, May 5; Saturday, May 7; Tuesday, May 10 and Thursday, May 12. All performances take place at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Georgia and Hamilton Streets, Vancouver, B.C. and begin at 7:30pm. Tickets are available exclusively at the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre, online at www.vancouveropera.ca or by telephone (604-683-0222). See complete ticket information below.

Sir Jonathan Miller is beloved for the 1960s comedy revue Beyond the Fringe, working alongside the brilliantly gifted Dudley Moore, Alan Bennett, and Peter Cook.

Jonathan Miller studied medicine at St. John’s College, Cambridge, where he became involved in the famous Cambridge Footlights. He held a research fellowship in the history of medicine at University College, London, and studied neuropsychology at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, later becoming a neuropsychology research fellow at Sussex University. He began directing opera and theatre in the 1970s and has since created several noted productions, including The Merchant of Venice, starring Laurence Olivier, Rigoletto for English National Opera, and several productions for The Metropolitan Opera. This production of La Traviata, a co-production with Glimmerglass Opera, was first staged in 2009.

Canadian soprano Erin Wall sings Violetta, the Parisian courtesan who leads a life of wild indulgence until she discovers the love of a good man. “The role of Violetta challenges sopranos to reach the highest rung of their range, which many cannot fully approach. Wall scaled those heights with little evidence of strain. Her every note left us giddy with goosebumps,” raved the Arizona Daily Star. “In three hours, we had connected with Wall on levels that go beyond merely absorbing her as a character. We absorbed her as a presence.”

Canadian tenor David Pomeroy sings Alfredo. Mr. Pomeroy was last seen on the VO stage as Don José in 2009’s box office record-breaking Carmen. “He has a beautiful sound and handled the technical challenges of the Flower Song well,” declared the Vancouver Sun.
La Traviata is based on the play La dame aux Camélias, which was in turn adapted from a novel by Alexandre Dumas fils. The opera was originally called Violetta, after the main character, but the title was changed to La Traviata, Italian for “the wayward woman”.

The first performance was on March 6, 1853 at La Fenice opera house in Venice. Soprani Fanny Salvini-Donatelli was cast as the young, tuberculosis-ravaged Violetta: an unfortunate choice, as Salvini-Donatelli was 38 years old and overweight. The audience was not impressed, and like many now-beloved operas, La Traviata was considered a failure upon opening. The following day, Verdi wrote what would become a very famous note to a friend: “La Traviata last night a failure. My fault or the singers? Time will tell.”

Revisions were made over the following two years and the opera was performed again, this time at Teatro San Benedetto, also in Venice. Maria Spezia-Aldighieri was cast as Violetta, to great success. La Traviata had its North American premiere in New York in 1856.

Today, La Traviata is one of the most famous and loved operas. It serves as the basis for several movies, including 1936’s Camille with Greta Garbo and Robert Taylor; Pretty Woman with Julia Roberts and Richard Gere; and Baz Luhrmann’s Moulin Rouge. The instantly recognizable drinking song Libiamo ne’lieti calici is the most famous selection from La Traviata.
Learn More

Film Screening: Camille
Thursday, April 7, 2011
Doors: 7:00pm • Introduction & Screening: 7:20pm
Vancity Theatre, Vancouver International Film Centre, 1181 Seymour Street
$11/$9 senior or student (includes $2 Vancity Film Centre membership)

In partnership with the Vancity Theatre, Vancouver Opera presents a series of films that explore themes and issues related to the season’s operas.

Named one of the top 100 movies ever made by Time magazine and based on the same novel and play as Giuseppe Verdi’s great opera La Traviata (La dame aux Camélias by Alexandre Dumas, fils), Camille is a tragic love story about a courtesan, Marguerite, and her handsome young suitor, Armand, starring Greta Garbo, Robert Taylor, Lionel Barrymore, Henry Daniell, Elizabeth Allan.

Camille will be introduced by national film journalist Katherine Monk. Ms. Monk’s writing appears in The National Post, The Vancouver Sun and Province, The Montreal Gazette, Calgary Herald and Ottawa Citizen among others. She is also a regular contributor for CBC Radio’s On the Coast and Global BC’s Early News.

Opera Speaks @ VPL
Tuesday, April 19, 2011
7:00pm – 9:00pm
Alice Mackay Room, Vancouver Public Library Central Branch
Free admission. Limited seating.

VO presents the latest instalment in its series of engaging discussions
Visit www.vancouveropera.ca for details

Full Ticket Information

Single tickets from $29 are available from the Vancouver Opera Ticket Centre, online at 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.

This production is generously sponsored by Mission Hill Family Estate.
Vancouver Opera’s 2010-2011 Season is generously sponsored by Goldcorp.