

news

2013 – 2014 Season

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VO's 2013-2014 season ends with a spectacular

DON CARLO

Massive production will be the first Vancouver performance of Verdi's masterpiece in 40 years

Vancouver, BC ~ For the first time in 40 years Vancouver audiences will experience the magnificence of Verdi's spectacular masterpiece, *Don Carlo*, the emotionally gripping drama of a king's brutal power and a son's brash rebellion. With formidable orchestral forces, a massive chorus and a powerhouse international cast, VO's final – and biggest – production of 2013-2014 promises to be this season's most explosive experience yet!

This thrilling opera blasts off the stage and into the hearts of audiences with a spectacular set, the sheer vocal power of 11 soloists, a chorus of 67 voices and 61 players in the orchestra pit. *Don Carlo* is on stage for four performances only, Saturday, May 3 to Sunday, May 11, 2014:

Saturday, May 3 • 7:30pm
Thursday, May 8 • 7:30pm
Saturday, May 10 • 7:30pm
Sunday, May 11 • 2:00pm matinée

All performances are at the **Queen Elizabeth Theatre**, corner of Georgia and Hamilton Streets, Vancouver, B.C. The opera will be sung in Italian, with simultaneous English translations projected above the stage.

Tickets from \$40 available exclusively from 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 available by phone.

THE SINGERS

Italian tenor **Andrea Carè** sings the title role. Mr. Carè was one of the last to study with Luciano Pavarotti, and a protégé of legendary Bulgarian soprano Raina Kabaivanska. He was the winner of the Spoleto International Opera Competition in 2005. Mr. Carè has sung at La Scala, Covent Garden, Deutsche Oper, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma,

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Grand Théâtre de Genève, Royal Opera House of Stockholm, and many others. He has shared the stage with Plácido Domingo, Anna Caterina Antonacci, Leo Nucci, Elina Garanca, and many others. This will be Mr. Carè's Vancouver Opera debut.

Also making her Vancouver Opera debut is soprano **Joni Henson**, singing the role of Elisabeth de Valois. Described as one of Canada's most thrilling young performers, Ms. Henson studied with Marilyn Horne and was awarded the Opera Grand Prize at the XVth Concours International de Chant de Verviers Competition in Belgium. She also received the First Place Opera and French Melodie Awards at the Concours International de Chant de Marmande Competition in France. In 2006 Ms. Henson was a semi-finalist in the Metropolitan National Council Auditions. "It's not hard to imagine this singer performing major Wagner roles in important opera houses within the next few years," declared *The Globe & Mail*.

Mezzo-soprano **Mary Phillips** also makes her Vancouver Opera debut as Princess Eboli in this production. Ms. Phillips's recent appearances include her acclaimed role debut as Brangaene in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* for Dallas Opera and Schwertleite in Wagner's *Ring* and Mrs. Alexander in Philip Glass's *Satyagraha* for the Metropolitan Opera. Ms. Phillips has been hailed for her Verdi, having sung Eboli in *Don Carlo* for the Canadian Opera Company and Azucena in *Il trovatore* at Seattle Opera. "Mary Phillips used her voice to its fullest dramatic potential; she was not afraid to invoke some grit to project visceral heartbreak," raved *The Houston Chronicle*.

Back at VO after a stunning turn as Don Giovanni earlier this year, baritone **Brett Pologato** sings Rodrigo. Mr. Pologato's artistic sensibility has earned him praise from audiences and critics, including *The New York Times*, which has noted his "burnished, well-focused voice" which he uses with "considerable intelligence and nuance." Mr. Pologato appears regularly on the world's most distinguished stages, including La Scala, Opéra National de Paris, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Carnegie Hall and others. Mr. Pologato can be heard as soloist in the Grammy Awards' Best Classical Recording of 2003 - Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony* (Telarc) with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Robert Spano.

Last seen at VO as Frère Laurent in 2011's *Roméo et Juliette*, bass **Peter Volpe** sings Philip II, the King of Spain. Mr. Volpe's inspired style and interpretive skill enlivens his repertoire of more than 100 roles in six languages. Recent highlights of Mr. Volpe's career include three broadcasts for the Metropolitan Opera's *Live in HD* series, the Verdi Requiem at the Chichester Festival (Chichester, England), and the role of Marcel in the popular French grand opera *Les Huguenots* at the Bard Festival (Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, New York) - the first time the opera was staged in America since the Metropolitan Opera's production 95 years earlier.

Bass **Gregory Frank** will sing the Grand Inquisitor in his Vancouver Opera debut. Mr. Frank has sung with Boston Lyric Opera, Greek National Opera, Finnish National Opera, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Baltimore Opera and several others.

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The Friar will be sung by bass-baritone **Chad Louwerse**, who returns to VO having last appeared alongside Peter Volpe as Le Duc in 2011's *Roméo et Juliette*. Mezzo-soprano **Kristin Hoff**, a participant in this year's Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program, makes her VO mainstage debut as Tebaldo. Count Lerma will be sung by tenor **Martin Sadd**, last seen as *səy' əm' 1* in VO's 2013 *The Magic Flute*. A Celestial Voice will be sung by soprano **Melanie Krueger**, who was last seen on the VO stage as Miss Wordsworth in 2013's *Albert Herring*. A Royal Herald will be sung by tenor **Frédéric Robert**, last seen as Spoletta in 2013's *Tosca*.

Don Carlo will be brought to life under the baton of VO's Music Director **Jonathan Darlington** (**Leslie Dala**, Associate Conductor and Chorus Director leads the VO Chorus.). **Paul Peers**, who last appeared at VO as director of 2013's gorgeous and stunning Canadian premiere of *Tea: A Mirror of Soul*, will direct this massively spectacular production.

THE CAST

Conducted by Jonathan Darlington

Directed by Paul Peers

Don Carlo	Andrea Carè
Elisabeth de Valois	Joni Henson
Princess Eboli	Mary Phillips
Rodrigo	Brett Polegato
Philip II	Peter Volpe
The Grand Inquisitor	Gregory Frank
A Friar	Chad Louwerse
Tebaldo	Kristin Hoff †
Count Lerma	Martin Sadd
A Celestial Voice	Melanie Krueger

Chorus Director / Associate Conductor: Leslie Dala

† *Member of the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program*

THE STORY IN BRIEF

In the war-torn 16th century, peace between France and Spain is secured when a French princess, Elisabeth de Valois, is given in marriage to Spain's King Philip. The King's son, Carlo, is shattered, for he is in love with her. When Carlo dares to defend the Flemish people from Philip's persecution, he incites both his father's fury and the awesome

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authority of the Grand Inquisitor. Believing that he has been doubly betrayed, Philip arrests Carlo and Elisabeth. In the dramatic final scene at the tomb of Charles V, a ghostly friar rescues Carlo from the wrath of Church and State.

Spectacular on a grand scale and also extraordinarily intimate, *Don Carlo* is one of Verdi's most impressive works. His orchestral colours are brilliant, his choruses are powerful, and his music for the monstrous yet very human king, the terrifying Inquisitor, and the heroic lovers is magnificent.

All performances are at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Approximate running time: 3 hours 5 minutes (including one intermission)

BACKGROUND

Don Carlos premiered in Paris on March 11, 1867 at the Salle le Peletier, home of the Paris Opera. The story is based on two works: the poem *Don Carlos, Infant von Spanien* by Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1787), and the 1846 play *Philippe II, roi d'Espagne* by Eugène Cormon. The opera's libretto, by Joseph Mèry and Camille du Locle, was originally written in French and later translated into Italian by Achille de Lauzières.

The production and performance history of *Don Carlos* is extremely complicated; many different forms of the opera are still staged. Three of the most commonly performed versions are the original five-act version in French, an Italian four-act version from 1884 - known as the "Milan" version, and the 1886 "Modena" version that added the original Act I to the revised 1884 acts. Verdi sanctioned and made some of the cuts and revisions, including the Milan version; others were done without permission.

Vancouver Opera's production will be the Italian version — the 'Milan' version, with the 's' in "Carlos" dropped, in keeping with the Italian spelling of the name.

The opera features the real historical figures Phillip II of Spain, his son Don Carlo, Princess Eboli, Elizabeth de Valois and (the ghost of) Charles V. Though the real Don Carlo did die during his imprisonment (perhaps murdered? Various conspiracy theories abound), the love triangle that appears in the opera appears to be a popular myth rather than historical fact.

Charles V passed away a few years after retiring from kingship. This gave rise to the legend of his ghost haunting the monastery where he spent his last years.

Phillip II was formerly brother-in-law to Queen Elizabeth I of England and organized the failed Spanish Armada invasion. The portrayal of Phillip II in history as a sometimes-villainous character is attributed to the Black Legend (anti-Spanish propaganda).

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Elizabeth de Valois grew up with Mary, Queen of Scots and was a daughter of Catherine de'Medici. Princess Eboli, a famous Spanish beauty, was commonly depicted with an eyepatch - she lost the eye in a childhood incident. She was married to a friend of Phillip II.

LEARN MORE

Opera Speaks at The Vancouver Academy of Music

Singing Verdi: A special masterclass/demonstration with VO Music Director Jonathan Darlington

Thursday April 17, 7:30pm

Vancouver Academy of Music, 1270 Chestnut Street

Free Admission

Plenty of paid parking in front of the building (between the VAM and the Museum of Vancouver)

What does it take to sing Verdi roles? When is a voice considered ready to make the leap into this challenging repertoire, with its powerful emotions and thick orchestrations?

Gain insights into the singers' and conductor's process in this rare class with Maestro Darlington, just two weeks before the opening of Verdi's powerful Don Carlo.

Featuring soprano Sheila Christie, bass-baritone Chad Louwerse, and pianist Kinza Tyrrell.

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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This production of *Don Carlo* is sponsored by BMO Financial Group

VO's 2013-2014 Season is generously sponsored by Goldcorp