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2013 – 2014 Season

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE February 3, 2014
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The world's most infamous lover arrives in Vancouver on March 1

In a spectacular new state-of-the-art production

DON GIOVANNI

Mozart's brilliant masterpiece is onstage for five performances only

Vancouver, BC ~ Audiences be warned: a dangerously attractive aristocrat will be in Vancouver when VO's *Don Giovanni* hits the Queen Elizabeth Theatre stage in just a few weeks. The serial seducer will captivate audiences for five passionate performances only, March 1 to 9, 2014. Based on the captivating figure of Don Juan, Mozart's treatment is comedic and tragic, complex, and a towering achievement of music and drama.

Opening night is **Saturday, March 1, 2014** with subsequent performances **Thursday March 6; Friday, March 7; Saturday, March 8**, all beginning at 7:30pm, and a matinée performance on **Sunday, March 9** at 2:00pm.

All performances are 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 or by telephone at 604-683-0222. See complete ticket information below. This production of *Don Giovanni* is a co-production with The Banff Centre.

Combining the traditional with the cutting edge, this production will feature period costumes and staging with a set design that calls heavily on stage-of-the-art projections, created by **Bob Bonniol**, well known for his spectacular visual effects for such artists as Shania Twain and Blue Man group, and for the scenic elements at the world-famous TED Talks.

The role of the reckless Giovanni, who leaves behind death and destruction in his pursuit of passion will be shared by two devastatingly charming singers. Bass-baritone **Daniel Okulitch**, recently seen on the VO stage singing the title role in 2009's *The Marriage of Figaro* - and currently starring in the world premiere of *Brokeback Mountain*, in Madrid - will sing on March 1, 6 and 8. Baritone **Brett Polegato**, last seen at VO as the rakish *Eugene Onegin* in 2008 will sing on March 7 and 9.

The O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera, 1945 McLean Drive, Vancouver, BC V5N 3J7 | 604-682-2871 fax 604-682-3981

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Joining Mr. Okulitch and Mr. Polegato are sopranos **Erin Wall** and **Katherine Whyte** as Donna Anna. Ms. Wall sang the tragic and beautiful Violetta in 2011's *La Traviata*; this will be Ms. Whyte's VO debut. Mezzo-soprano **Krisztina Szabó** and soprano **Leslie Ann Bradley** will sing Donna Elvira. Ms. Szabó charmed audiences as the fiery and street-smart Musetta in 2012's *La bohème*, and as Sesto in 2011's *La clemenza di Tito*; Ms. Bradley makes her VO debut.

Don Ottavio will be sung by tenor **Colin Ainsworth**, memorable for his performances as the sweet yet determined Tony in VO's stellar 2011 production of *West Side Story*, and as Kristian in VO's world-premiere production of Estacio and Murrell's *Lillian Alling, in 2010*. The roles of Leporello and the Commendatore will be alternately sung by bass-baritones **Stephen Hegedus** and **Giles Tomkins**. Mr. Hegedus appeared earlier this season as Angelotti in 2013's *Tosca*. Mr. Tomkins sang the *harrumphing* Superintendent Budd in VO's delightful *Albert Herring* this past December. Soprano **Rachel Fenlon** (Mabel in 2012's *The Pirates of Penzance*) will sing Zerlina; baritone **Aaron Durand** (Sid in 2013's *Albert Herring*) will sing Masetto.

Steuart Bedford returns to VO to conduct the Vancouver Opera Orchestra and Vancouver Opera Chorus (**Leslie Dala**, Chorus Director / Associate Conductor), having last appeared 13 years ago to conduct the 2000 production of *Don Giovanni*. Maestro Bedford is noted worldwide as a leading exponent of Mozart's operas and for his close collaboration with Benjamin Britten: he conducted the world premiere of *Death in Venice*, in 1973. He is a professor at the Royal Academy of Music and the Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival. The stage director is **Kelly Robinson**, who last appeared with VO for the 2010 world premiere of *Lillian Alling*.

THE STORY, IN BRIEF

Don Giovanni is a dangerously attractive aristocrat and serial seducer who leaves death and destruction in his wake. Defying both society and God in his reckless pursuit of gratification, he manages to evade the vengeful retribution of his most outraged victims, only to self-destruct as he is dragged to hell in a surreal encounter with a curse-hurling stone statue.

Mozart's musical and dramatic portrait of this complex character, and of those whose lives he stains, is Shakespearean in its understanding of human nature. Filled with wisdom and beauty, and by turns funny and terrifying, *Don Giovanni* is a towering creation, which we honour with a spectacular new co-production featuring state-of-the-art stage technology and design.

BACKGROUND

With interpretations by everyone from Molière to Johnny Depp, the character of Don Juan, the serial seducer, has captivated audiences since he first appeared around 1630 in Spanish playwright Tirso de Molina's play *El burlador de*

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Sevilla y convidado de piedra (The Trickster of Seville and the Stone Guest). Since then, the rakish Don has appeared in works by Lord Byron, George Bernard Shaw, Sylvia Townsend, Ingmar Bergman, John Berger and others.

Don Juan first appeared as the main character in a morality tale. In Molina's play, he seduces women with deception and sometimes force, kills the father of one of the women and then proceeds to mock the dead man. He meets his end with a fitting punishment: dragged to hell to burn in the fires of justice - a fine example for Catholics who were contemplating straying from their principles.

Molière's take, first performed about 30 years later, was slightly different. His Don Juan is an anti-hero: an irreverent intellectual who prefers honesty over hypocrisy. He is flippant and unrepentant, and even worse, witty and entertaining. Audiences were amused rather than awed, and the play was withdrawn after a few performances.

The ambiguity of the character is still explored today. In a 2006 production for London's West End, Patrick Marber presented *Don Juan in Soho*, in which 'DJ' is a metropolitan playboy living in a secular world where there is no divine retribution. Instead (spoiler alert!) justice is meted out by the brother of the wife DJ abandoned.

In 1994, Don Juan appears as a lost young man, played by Johnny Depp in Jeremy Leven's film *Don Juan DeMarco*. In 2010, he is captured in *Juan*, Kasper Holten's film version of Mozart's opera, and he appears yet again in 2013 in the film *Don Jon*, starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

Is Don Juan an irredeemable villain, or a misunderstood romantic hero? Re-inventions abound, but whether he is one or the other, or something in between, no other character is as beguiling as the world's most infamous lover.

FULL TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets 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.

VO IN THE COMMUNITY

VO presents an teaser before opening night of *Don Giovanni*. Enjoy an evening of opera excerpts from the world's most popular masterpieces. Be seduced by Carmen, entertained by the Barber of Seville and much more! A quartet of talented performers will thrill you with the beautiful sounds and high-flying acrobatics of superb opera singing. An evening for the whole family! Free giveaways for everyone who attends.

BONUS: All attendees will receive \$20 in VO Opera Bucks! Opera Bucks can be used towards the purchase of tickets to VO performances of *Don Giovanni* or *Don Carlo* at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

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Tickets: \$20 (Children under 18: \$10)

Saturday, February 8, 2014

7:30pm - 9:00pm

Surrey Arts Centre main stage • 13750 - 88 Avenue, Surrey

1 block east of King George Blvd, off 88 Ave. Free parking.

Tickets now available from the Surrey Arts Centre Box Office, online at tickets.surrey.ca or by telephone at 604-501-5566.

Adults: \$20. Students, seniors, children aged 18 and under: \$10. Plus service charges.

Saturday February 15

7:30pm - 9:00pm

Steveston London Secondary School • 6600 Williams Road, Richmond

Williams Road at Gilbert Road.

Tickets now available from the VO Ticket Centre: 604-683-0222.

Adults: \$20. Students, seniors, children aged 18 and under: \$10.

Saturday, March 22

7:30pm - 9:00pm

Gateway Theatre • 6500 Gilbert Road, Richmond

Between Westminster Highway and Granville Ave, next to Richmond Hospital.

Tickets now available from the Gateway Theatre Box Office, [online](#) or by telephone at 604-270-1812.

Adults: \$20. Students, seniors, children aged 18 and under: \$10.

Featuring this year's Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program participants: Aaron Durand, Baritone, Rocco Rupolo, Tenor, Kristin Hoff, Mezzo-soprano, Sheila Christie, Soprano, Kimberley-Ann Bartczak, Pianist

The "Opera's Greatest Hits - and More" concerts received funding from OPERA America's Building Opera Audiences Grant Program, generously supported by the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.

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