

news

2013 – 2014 Season

release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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vancouveropera

**VANCOUVER OPERA UNVEILS FRESH LOOK**

Bold new branding reflects company's new long-term strategy of innovative programming  
and greater community engagement  
Some casting details for 2014-2015 season also announced

**Vancouver, BC** ~ Vancouver Opera unveils its bold, new look and feel - the first major rebranding of the company since 1985. The fresh contemporary look is part of the company's new long-term strategy aimed at broadening and deepening its connection with the communities it serves, while building a new generation of operagoers.

The redesigned logomark reflects a new perspective on Vancouver Opera by literally flipping it on its side. In it, V and O - Vancouver and Opera - come together, representing the connection between city and art form. Where they overlap they are at their strongest and most intense.

The new look was created by VO's in-house graphic designer **Annie Mack**. VO also worked with consultants in design and branding: **Odetta Hidalgo**, Art Director at Addon Creative Communications Design, provided art direction and an invaluable creative sounding board; and **Joanne Turner**, Principal, Joanne Turner Marketing Strategy, helped provide a strategic framework for the process.

VO's redesigned website will be launched in May 2014, at the conclusion of the current season.

"I'm very pleased with VO's new look," comments **James W. Wright**, General Director of Vancouver Opera. "It's confident, approachable, and serves our aim of conveying the contemporary, innovative, adventurous, and professional nature of our company and our programming. I believe it will resonate equally with new audiences and the dedicated opera lovers who have faithfully supported us for more than 50 years."

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## VO'S MISSION

*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.*

VO's new direction includes new opera experiences in new venues, and new programming in communities south of the Fraser River. In future seasons, VO will enrich the educational value of its long-standing school touring program for children by concentrating the program largely in Metro Vancouver. In 2014-2015, the company will present the already-announced world premiere of its commissioned anti-bullying opera *Stickboy*, by composer Neil Weisensel and librettist Shane Koyczan, based on Koyczan's novel in verse. Twelve performances of *Stickboy* will be presented in the Vancouver Playhouse.

VO will continue to present works from the opera canon on a grand scale in the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. The 2014-15 season includes Bizet's beloved *Carmen* and Johann Strauss Jr.'s tuneful, joyous (and slightly sinister) *Die Fledermaus*. The season will also include, at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, a production of Stephen Sondheim's masterful *Sweeney Todd*, the darkly beautiful study of obsession and revenge. See below for dates and casting details.

## INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY

All VO productions include English translations projected above the stage.

Sunday Matinéés are now part of VO's regular performance schedule. VO offers \$35 tickets to patrons aged 35 and younger under its Get O.U.T. program (Get Opera Under 35), sponsored by TD Canada Trust. In 2014-2015, for the production of *Stickboy*, VO will offer some "U-19" seats, at \$19, to youth under the age of 19.

## THE 2014-2015 SEASON

**Great Singers. Great Music. Great Adventure.**

VO's 2014-2015 includes a world premiere in an intimate venue, the company premiere of a 20th century masterpiece, a hilarious Vancouver version of a sparkling favourite, and the thrill of a popular masterpiece. The season features performances by Greer Grimsley, internationally recognized as one of the most prominent Wagnerian interpreters of the day, Andriana Chuchman, fresh from a bravura debut performance at The Metropolitan Opera, where she stepped in for Anna Netrebko, and two fiery *Carmens* in Kate Aldrich and Ginger Costa-Jackson. VO's Music Director Jonathan Darlington will conduct *Die Fledermaus* and *Sweeney Todd*.

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*Deadly passion in Spain*

## CARMEN

*by Georges Bizet*

Production sponsored by Mission Hill Family Estate

In French with English translations projected above the stage  
September 27, 28 (matinée), October 2, 3, 4, 5 (matinée), 2014  
Evening performances 7:30pm • Matinée performances 2:00pm.  
All performances at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Uninhibited dancing in a smoke-filled tavern. Songs pulsing with erotic power. Sinister felonies in a mountain pass. Murder outside a bull ring. Carmen is justly revered for its thrilling drama and its irresistible music, so rich in energy and passion that it lives with audiences forever.

Conducted by **Jacques Lacombe** • Directed by **Joel Ivany**

Sensational mezzo-sopranos **Kate Aldrich** and **Ginger Costa-Jackson** share the title role in Bizet's brilliant masterpiece. Ms. Aldrich stunned VO audiences in 2009's *Norma*. "Kate Aldrich makes her VO debut: we will want to hear more from her. Solid throughout her range, capable of beautifully synchronised blend, she brought both fiery intensity and considerable sweetness to her role," raved *The Vancouver Sun* for that performance. Ms. Costa-Jackson is creating a sensation everywhere she performs, for her compelling stage presence and her gorgeous singing. She has sung with Glimmerglass Opera, San Francisco Opera and at Carnegie Hall. This will be her VO debut.

Tenors **Richard Troxell** and **Khachatur Badalyan** will share the role of Don José. "His final murderous scene with Carmen outside the bullring built to a splendid intensity..." raved *The Oregonian* for Mr. Troxell's Don José. Mr. Badalyan was first prize winner of the International Tenor Competition in memory of Luciano Pavarotti (St. Petersburg). Baritone **Morgan Smith** will sing Escamillo.

*A moving new opera*

## STICKBOY

*Composed by Neil Weisensel • Libretto by Shane Koyczan*

In English with lyrics projected above the stage  
October 23, 24, 25, 28, 29 (student matinée), 30, November 1 (matinée), 1 (evening), 4, 5 (matinée), 6, 7, 2014  
Evening performances 7:30pm • November 1 matinée 1:30pm, November 5 matinée 2:00pm.  
All performances at the Vancouver Playhouse

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The inner life of a young boy is at the heart of this moving and meaningful new opera by world-renowned spoken-word artist Shane Koyczan and composer Neil Weisensel.

Bravely autobiographical, beautifully poetic, visually innovative and musically memorable, *Stickboy* confronts the uncomfortable reality of a society struggling with its own fear and insecurity, a society that seeks conformity and uniformity at the expense of those who are different. This visually stunning world premiere will feature set design by **Drew Facey** and animation by **Giant Ant**, the producers of Mr. Koyczan's monumentally popular video *To This Day*.

Conducted by **Leslie Dala** • Directed by **Rachel Peake**

**Neil Weisensel** is one of the most frequently-performed and prolific opera composers in Canada. His six operas have together seen 115 performances across Canada. He has also composed and arranged music for feature films, stage works, documentaries, and animation. **Shane Koyczan** was catapulted into the international spotlight when he performed his poem *We Are More* at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics opening ceremonies. In 2013, Mr. Koyczan collaborated with animators and illustrators to create *To This Day*, an animated short about bullying that was released at the TED Conference. The video left attendees in tears and has since gone viral with more than 12 million views.

*Laughter, love and sweet revenge... while waltzing!*

**DIE FLEDERMAUS**

*by Johann Strauss, Jr.*

Production sponsored by Blakes

In English with lyrics projected above the stage

February 28, March 5, 7, 8 (matinée), 2015

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

All performances at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre

**New adaptation, in English, by Bill Richardson**

In high society Vancouver – call it “Viennacouver” – every night is party night! Lighthearted, romantic, and wickedly funny, *Die Fledermaus* has the power to lift our spirits. Strauss’s melody-filled music, especially his famous waltzes, is effervescent and intoxicating. Be prepared to laugh!

Featuring soprano **Joyce el-Khoury** as Rosalinde, tenor **Roger Honeywell** as Gabriel von Eisenstein, and **Christopher Gaze** as the tipsy jailer, Frosch.

Conducted by **Jonathan Darlington** • Directed by **Nancy Hermiston, O.C.**

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Canadian soprano Joyce el-Khoury's "sound is enormously satisfying — a full lirico-spinto soprano with a genuine radiance about it" (OPERA NEWS). She has sung with Santa Fe Opera, the BBC Orchestra, with the New York Choral Society at Carnegie Hall, and is a graduate of The Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. **Roger Honeywell**, a favourite of Vancouver audiences, was last seen on the VO stage in 2013's Canadian debut of *Tea: A Mirror of Soul*. Mezzo-soprano **Julie Boulianne** and baritone **Hugh Russell** return to the VO stage, having last charmed audiences in 2011's *Roméo et Juliette* and 2008's *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, respectively. **Christopher Gaze** returns to VO, having delighted audiences as the Major-General in 2012's *The Pirates of Penzance*.

*Lethal obsession on the streets of 19th century London*

**SWEENEY TODD**

by *Stephen Sondheim*

Production sponsored by BMO

In English with lyrics projected above the stage

April 25, 26 (matinée), 30, May 1, 2, 3 (matinée), 2015

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

All performances at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Winner of countless awards, *Sweeney Todd* is darkly comical and endlessly entertaining. The production will be directed by **Kim Collier**, one of Canada's hottest stage directors (*Hamlet*, *Bard on the Beach*, 2013). The indelible cast of characters and the evocatively grimy London setting combine with Sondheim's unmatched lyrics and complex orchestral score for a rich theatrical and musical experience.

Starring real-life husband and wife **Greer Grimsley**, one of the great bass-baritones of his generation, as Sweeney Todd, and acclaimed mezzo-soprano **Luretta Bybee** as Mrs. Lovett. Canadian soprano **Andriana Chuchman**, fresh from a bravura debut performance at The Metropolitan Opera (where she stepped in for Anna Netrebko for two performances of *L'Elisir d'Amore*) will sing Johanna.

Conducted by **Jonathan Darlington** • Directed by **Kim Collier**

**Greer Grimsley** awed VO audiences with his powerful bass-baritone in John the Baptist in 2009's *Salome*. Mr. Grimsley is internationally recognized as one of the most prominent Wagnerian singers of the day. He is the leading interpreter of Wotan in Wagner's Ring Cycle, which he recently sang at The Metropolitan Opera. **Luretta Bybee**'s most recent engagements include the role of Dame Marthe in *Faust* with Arizona Opera, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Seattle Symphony and San Antonio Symphony, Madame Armfeldt in *A Little Night Music* with the Pine Mountain Music Festival, and Wagner's Ring Cycle with Seattle Opera.

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**Andriana Chuchman** has sung with The Metropolitan Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and others. “Her voice took on a melting fullness, shifting with exuberant vigor from long, lyrical phrases to glittering little tumbles of notes,” raved the *New York Times* for her Met debut.

#### **FULL TICKET INFORMATION**

Subscriptions for the 2014-2015 season are available exclusively to current VO season subscribers. They will be available to the general public in April, 2014. Single tickets for the current 2013-2014 season are available 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 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 seasons are generously sponsored by Goldcorp