

TOSCA ALBERT HERRING DON GIOVANNI DON CARLO

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Vancouver Opera Brings First Ever Concert to City of Surrey *Live Show, February 8, Surrey Arts Centre*

**Vancouver, BC** ~ The powerful art of opera singing will be on display in Surrey next month when Vancouver Opera presents "Opera's Greatest Hits – and More" on Saturday, February 8 at the Surrey Arts Centre. The intimate and affordable family-friendly concert stars four of the region's most talented and charismatic young singers.

The concert – a perfect taste of opera for newcomers and opera lovers alike – will feature a selection of opera's greatest arias and ensembles, including the sultry "Habanera" from *Carmen*; Figaro's famously charming and funny solo from *The Barber of Seville* (familiar for its "Figaro! Figaro! Figaro!" refrain); the beautiful duet for tenor and baritone from *The Pearl Fishers*; and many more. There will also be a few unexpected surprises to keep everyone on the edge of their seats.

"The City of Surrey is a growing metropolis with a very dynamic arts community," says James W. Wright, Vancouver Opera General Director. "The VO is looking to further engage the arts community in Surrey, as well as showcase the beauty and power of opera to new audiences, right where they live. This concert on February 8 will allow people to take the first step, and get a tantalizing taste of this historic and highly entertaining art form."

Audiences will be guided through the performance by a genial host who will provide context and background. Tickets are just \$20 for adults and \$10 for seniors, students and children aged 18 and under. (Service charges may apply.)

As a bonus, every ticket-holder will receive a special \$20 Opera Bucks voucher. The Opera Bucks can be used toward the purchase of regularly-priced tickets to either of VO's remaining productions at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre this season: Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Verdi's *Don Carlo*. (Some restrictions apply.)

**EVENT:** "Opera's Greatest Hits - and More"

**DATE:** Saturday, February 8, 2014

**TIME:** 7:30 pm

**LOCATION:** Surrey Arts Centre (main stage)

Tickets are now available from the Surrey Arts Centre Box Office, online at [tickets.surrey.ca](http://tickets.surrey.ca) or by telephone at 604-501-5566.

Adults: \$20. Seniors, students, and children under the age of 18: \$10. Plus service charges.

**The accomplished and energetic performers** are all members of VO's Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program:

Soprano **Sheila Christie** holds a Master of Music degree in Opera Performance from the University of British Columbia and has appeared with Vancouver Opera, Burnaby Lyric Opera, Usti and Labem City Opera, the UBC Opera Ensemble, the

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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Vancouver Philharmonic Orchestra and the Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra. She was semi-finalist in The Third Annual China (Ningbo) International Vocal Competition and has received an Encouragement Award at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, a Vancouver Opera Guild grant for a promising BC singer, and the Joe Boxer Memorial Fund award from Vancouver Opera.

Mezzo-soprano **Kristin Hoff** recently made her Carnegie Hall début. She has been a soloist with the Boston Pops Symphony Orchestra, the Mark Morris Dance Company, l'Orchestre Symphoniques des Jeunes de Montréal, Chants Libres, Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Ensemble Sinfonia, l'Orchestre de la francophonie, Talisker Players, Tapestry New Opera and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. Ms. Hoff was chosen as a Caramoor Vocal Rising Star in 2012 and is a recent first prize winner in the NYCO Mozart Vocal Competition. Her recent roles include Anna Murrant, Ottavia, Marcellina, Prinz Orlofsky, Donna Elvira, Mrs. Anderssen, Carmen, the Mezzo-Soprano in Claude Vivier's *Kopernikus*, and Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. This season, Ms. Hoff will perform the role of Tebaldo in Vancouver Opera's production of *Don Carlo*.

Tenor **Rocco Rupolo** is participating in the Opera Diploma Program at the University of Toronto. During his studies, he has sung the roles of Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Monsieur Lacouff in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, L'Amante in *Amelia al Ballo*, Cecco in *Il mondo della luna*, and the Governor/Ensemble in *Candide*. His recent performances include Nemorino in Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'amore* and Pâris in Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène* at the University of Toronto, as well as Anthony in *Sweeney Todd* with the Aspen Summer Music Festival..

Baritone **Aaron Durand** began his opera studies at the Victoria Conservatory of Music. He transferred to UBC in 2007 and has since performed lead roles in *Così fan tutte*, *Louis Riel*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Cendrillon*, *Albert Herring*, and *The Merry Widow*. He recently participated in Vancouver Opera's Young Artist Coaching Intensive and completed his Masters in Music at UBC. Mr. Durand returns to the Young Artists Program after participating in last season's inaugural year, during which he appeared as Schaunard in *La bohème*, Samuel in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and The Speaker in *The Magic Flute*. This season, he sang the role of Sid in *Albert Herring* and in March will sing Masetto in *Don Giovanni*.

Pianist **Kimberley-Ann Bartczak** holds a Master's Degree in Collaborative Piano from the University of Toronto. During her studies, she was the répétiteur for the university's opera program, accompanist for the university's Women's Chorus and for the Mississauga Festival Choir, and music director for Opera 5's production of Milton Granger's *Talk Opera*. Ms. Bartczak was also a pianist and coach at the Centre for Opera Studies in Italy (COSI), at Opera on the Avalon, and at St. Andrews Opera Workshop. A native of Montreal, and very active in the choral community, Ms. Bartczak was the conductor for the Choir Chant-O-Vent, as well as accompanist to many semi-professional choirs in the Montreal area.

Stage Director **Fanny Gilbert-Collet** completed her Masters in Fine Arts in Theatre Directing at the University of Ottawa in 2011, where she directed *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Maeterlinck/Debussy), *Judith* (Barker) and *Medea-Material* (Müller). Ms. Gilbert-Collet has taught classes at the University of Ottawa and has co-directed and co-written a creation for Théâtre la Catapulte, Ottawa. In addition she has also appeared as an assistant stage director for Opera NUOVA in Edmonton and for a remounting of *Die Zauberflöte* (directed by Mariame Clément) in Nice. During the summer 2013 Ms. Gilbert-Collet returned to NUOVA Edmonton to direct *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* through the Vocal Arts Festival and directed a new

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version of *La Bohème* with Opéra Immédiat, Montreal.. This season, she has served as assistant stage director for VO's productions of *Tosca* and *Albert Herring* and will appear in that capacity for *Don Giovanni* and *Don Carlo*.

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

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