



For Immediate Release
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FIGARO! FIGARO! FIGARO!
**Opera Colorado kicks off the Valentine season with Rossini's
romantic comedy THE BARBER OF SEVILLE**
4 Performances Only: February 6, 9, 12 & 14

Opera Colorado presents
The Barber of Seville
by Gioachino Rossini

Ellie Caulkins Opera House,
Denver Performing Arts Complex,
14th and Curtis, downtown Denver

Sat., February 6, 7:30 pm
Tue., February 9, 7:30 pm
Fri. February 12, 7:30 pm
Sun., February 14, 2:00 pm

Prices: \$30-\$160

Tickets online:
OperaColorado.org

Tickets by phone:
800.982.ARTS (2787)

The Barber of Seville is
sponsored by:
Mike and Julie Bock,
CIBER, Inc.,
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Opera Colorado's 2009-2010
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Ellie Caulkins and
Susan & Jeremy Shamos.

DENVER, CO—The world's most celebrated barber is coming to the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, but haircuts aren't the only thing on his mind. Opera Colorado presents Rossini's lively comedy *The Barber of Seville* for four performances, February 6 through 14.

The performances feature some of the best and brightest of today's opera stars, including baritone **Lucas Meachem** in the title role and mezzo-soprano **Isabel Leonard** singing the role of Rosina. Directed by veteran **David Gately** and featuring the **Colorado Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Leonardo Vordoni**, the cast also includes **Brian Stucki** as the love-struck Count Almaviva, **Thomas Hammons** as curmudgeonly Dr. Bartolo and **Wayne Tigges** as Rosina's music teacher Basilio.

"*Barber* is a very light-hearted funny evening," said director David Gately. "The music is bubbly and champagne-like when you listen to it. And it is very recognizable for an audience so that's part of the fun. Immediately when the overture starts, there's a murmur across the audience and people realize they know it, they heard it in a shaving commercial or something. They all know '*Figaro, Figaro, Figao*' and they all know the Bugs Bunny cartoons."

Gately is very familiar with audience reaction to *The Barber of Seville*. The Opera Colorado production will be the thirty-first time that Gately has directed the beloved classic. However, no matter how many times he's seen or directed the opera, Gately always finds new challenges in the work. "It's hard work every time," he says. "You can't phone it in, it's always complicated. For me, when I sit in the audience and watch them react, that's what it's about. I want to challenge them to listen and pay attention. I don't really have a favorite moment after hearing it this many times but I do enjoy listening to an audience respond to what's happening on stage and seeing what bits of characterization are understood."

Gately says that every time he directs the opera, he learns something new from the performers he is working with. Like many great comedians who refine their stand-up routines over years, perfecting every detail, Gately has honed his interpretation of the opera over time. "If you saw the first one I did at the Lake George Opera Festival in 1977 and then you saw Opera Colorado's performance, you might see some similarities. Yet much has changed because so many artists have brought their ideas to me and some of that has stuck with me."

The Artists

LUCAS MEACHEM as Figaro (Opera Colorado debut)

Mr. Meachem recently sang the role of Figaro with Los Angeles Opera and sang the title role in *Don Giovanni* at Santa Fe Opera last summer. Other recent appearances include Fritz/Frank in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* with Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Bayerische Staatsoper and Valentin in *Faust* with Minnesota Opera. Last season, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. A 2005 Adler Fellow with San Francisco Opera, Mr. Meachem has sung major roles with that company as well as Lyric Opera of Chicago.

ISABEL LEONARD as Rosina (Opera Colorado debut)

Ms. Leonard's 2009/2010 season began with one of her signature roles: Cherubino in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Metropolitan Opera. Next, she will debut at Opera National de Paris in the same role. Another debut follows as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* at the Glyndebourne Festival Opera. She will also perform as a featured soloist in the prestigious annual musicale at the Supreme Court in Washington DC, in collaboration with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Ms. Leonard's career includes other notable performances with Santa Fe Opera, Cincinnati May Festival, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic and many others.

BRIAN STUCKI as Count Almaviva (Opera Colorado debut)

Mr. Stucki's recent engagements include the roles of Nadir in *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* with Seattle Opera, Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Opera Pacific, and Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* with the Opera Company of North Carolina. He also made his international debut as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* with New Israeli Opera followed by performances of Mozart's Mass in C, Requiem, and Mass in C minor with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. He also joined the Compañía Nacional de Opera at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City and in Tijuana for Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. He has performed with Michigan Opera Theater, Piedmont Opera, Dicapo Opera Theatre and many others.

THOMAS HAMMONS as Dr. Bartolo (Opera Colorado debut: *Nixon in China*, 2008)

Mr. Hammons originated the role of Henry Kissinger in *Nixon in China* by John Adams with Houston Grand Opera in 1987 and subsequently traveled with the production to Amsterdam, Paris, Frankfurt and Los Angeles. He also participated in the world premiere of Adams' *The Death of Klinghoffer*. He can be heard on the Nonesuch recordings of these works as well as the recent Naxos recording of *Nixon* recorded with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and Opera Colorado. Mr. Hammons has also appeared with Santa Fe Opera, New York City Opera, The Washington National Opera, Florida Grand Opera, L'Opera de Montreal, Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Spoleto Festival USA and at Barcelona's famed Teatro Liceu.

WAYNE TIGGES as Basilio (Opera Colorado debut)

Mr. Tigges has performed with major companies across the nation, including Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Austin Lyric Opera and San Diego Opera, among many others. In addition to his performances on the opera stage, Mr. Tigges maintains a busy concert schedule, performing with Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Ravinia Festival, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati May Festival and many others.

DAVID GATELY, Director (Opera Colorado debut: *Don Pasquale*, 2008)

Recent productions of note include his direction of *L'Elisir d'Amore* with The Dallas Opera, *Madama Butterfly* with Seattle Opera, *La bohème* with Florida Grand Opera, *Carmen* in New Orleans, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Edmonton, *Die Zauberflöte* with the Cincinnati and Vancouver Operas, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with both the Florentine Opera and Glimmerglass Opera, *Falstaff* with Opera Omaha, and *Rigoletto* with Utah Opera. His "wild west" production of *Don Pasquale* has been mounted by San Diego Opera, Kentucky Opera, Calgary Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Virginia Opera, Dayton Opera, Canadian Opera Company, Opera Colorado, Opera Omaha, Edmonton Opera and Fort Worth Opera.

LEONARDO VORDONI, Conductor (Opera Colorado debut)

Born in Trieste, Italy, he made his conducting debut in 2004 at the Teatro Mancinelli in Orvieto with *Così fan tutte*. In the U.S., he has conducted *L'Italiana in Algeri* with Seattle Opera, *La Cenerentola* for Houston Grand Opera and *Il trovatore* and *Le nozze di Figaro* for San Diego Opera. Maestro Vordoni is Assistant Conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York where his productions include: *Macbeth*, *La traviata*, *Aïda*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *La bohème*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Norma*, and *Madama Butterfly*.

Costumes for this production are designed by **Anna Björnsdotter**. The set was designed by **John W. Stoddard** and comes from Canadian Opera Company. Lighting is designed by **Mark J. Gabriel DeBell**.

The Barber of Seville plays at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House February 6, 9, and 12 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, February 14 at 2:00 pm.

Tickets range in price from \$30 to \$160 and are available at OperaColorado.org or by phone at 800.982.ARTS.

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